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"I did not want to inspire tears. I want to do something about education in the west."  
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The way China's avant-garde see themselves is growing and maturing along with the whole of society.  
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## A Hard Won Victory

### Japanese court rules Chinese slave laborers eligible for compensation



Chinese plaintiffs and their supporters head to the Niigata District Court in Japan on March 26 demanding compensation from the Japanese government and a Japanese company over their forced labor in Japan during World War II.  
Photo by Photocome

Around 40,000 Chinese were sent forcibly to Japan and made to work in 135 workplaces for 35 corporations during World War II. Some 7,000 of them died, according to statistics released by the Japanese government in 1946.

By Su Wei

In a landmark ruling last Friday, a Japanese court ordered the government and a private company to pay damages to 12 Chinese plaintiffs who were brought to Japan as slave laborers during World War II. All the plaintiffs are in their late 70s or early 80s, with two relatives representing Liu Fengge, who died of a cerebral hemorrhage a few days before he was to testify before the court at the end of April, 2000. The Japanese government issued a statement yesterday saying it would appeal the decision. **Court's decision** The 12 lodged their lawsuit at the Niigata District Court in August 1999, demanding 275 million yen (US \$2.6 million) compensation from the Japanese government and the Niigata-based distribution company Rinko. The claim was based on the "illegal act conducted jointly by Japan and the company" of their being forcefully taken from China to Japan to perform slave labor during World War II. Before the court handed down its verdict, the Japanese government claimed the country's law at that time exempted the state from compensation claims and also claimed exemp-

tion on the basis that the statute of limitations had passed. The defense team for Rinko also argued that the 20-year statute, under Japanese law, had expired. Presiding Judge Noriyoshi Katano acknowledged that the 12 were forced to perform hard labor under poor conditions for the Niigata-based harbor transport company Rinko, adding that the defendants failed to comply with their obligation to ensure safe working conditions. "Their lives, physical safety and freedom were infringed," he said in his ruling. "Applying legal principles from before the end of the war, which said civil law could not be applied for actions by state power, in a case of such massive violations of human rights would be an excessive lack of legitimacy from the standpoint of justice and fairness," Katano stressed. The court finally ordered the government and the company to jointly pay eight million yen to each of the 11 surviving slave laborers. **Justice done** The announcement of the decision was greeted with applause and tears in the courtroom. "This is a historic decision," one supporter who attended

the court session, was quoted as saying in the *Japan Times*. One of the plaintiffs, 78-year-old Wang Chengwei, offered a heart-felt "Thank you" to everyone who supported his cause after the decision was announced. "My father had said that it would be difficult to win," Wang's son, Wang Haijing, said after the ruling. "I am glad to have been able to hear a positive verdict while my father is still alive." Another plaintiff, 83-year-old Zhang Wenbin, had previously said, "I want the Japanese government and companies to face history, compensate and apologize." According to court documents, over 900 Chinese were brought to Niigata in 1944 by the Japanese military and put to work at the Niigata port and train stations as porters carrying food and coal. The 12 plaintiffs received little food, were abused and were not paid for their labor, said the documents. **A shock to Japan** The ruling came as a shock to the government, Kyodo News Agency reported. "The ruling runs counter to verdicts in similar lawsuits that rejected such compensation demands, and some government officials said it ran against judicial precedent," the news

agency stated last weekend. "It was a very severe ruling for the government," deputy chief cabinet secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda told reporters in Tokyo last Friday, as reported in the *Japan Times*. Hosoda acknowledges that many people had suffered as a result of forced labor, but repeated the government's line that war reparations were settled in the 1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty formally ending the Pacific War and in later bilateral treaties, adding that China renounced its demand for war reparations from Japan in the 1972 Joint Communiqué signed by the two countries. The Japanese government is reportedly taking issue with the fact that the ruling rejects the understanding that the state is not obligated to pay compensation for the illegal actions of civil servants. "The district court has overturned something that has been recognized by the Supreme Court," one senior justice ministry official was quoted in the *Japan Times*. **(Continued on page 2)**

### China Takes Countermeasures on US Visa Process

China Tuesday announced to take countermeasures against the US decision to fingerprint most Chinese who will go to the United States. The measures include granting ordinary visas and levying a visa fee for US personnel holding diplomatic or service passports who are traveling for personal purposes and requiring interviews with some US citizens who are applying for visas to China in the Chinese embassy and consulates. The decision also banned US citizens from applying for visas upon arrival in China. On March 22, the US embassy in China started collecting the fingerprints of Chinese who will go to the United States. Other US consulates in China will also adopt the practice, according to the US embassy. The US practice mainly targets visa applicants from the Middle East, Asia and Latin America, and excludes Canada and 27 European countries. **(Xinhua)**

### Reader Questionnaire

*Family Name			
*Given Name			
Gender			
Age	Under 20	20-30	
	30-40	Over 40	
Home phone			
Business phone			
Mobile phone			
Address			
Fax			
*Email			

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# City Invites Olympic-related Investment

By Xiao Rong

A total of 376 projects seeking global investments worth 135 billion yuan will be recommended at a Market Promotion Conference on Olympic Economy set to be held in the capital on April 18 and 19.

This was announced yesterday by the Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Commission, which introduced in detail major Olympic-related investments to be promoted at the conference.

Municipal authorities will provide briefings on the eight main

sectors that are expected to benefit from the huge economic potential brought by the 2008 Beijing Games. The golden opportunities lie in the areas of public infrastructure, road transportation, environmental protection, manufacturing and high technology, outskirts economy, consuming market, public services and cultural industry, and tourism.

The 376 projects inviting public bids range from infrastructure projects worth of 73 billion yuan, high technology projects valued at about 10 billion yuan, cultural,

educational, sports and public health projects worth 5 billion yuan, as well as other projects with a total value of 47 billion yuan, according to Liu Zhi, vice director of the commission.

The 22 key projects with an estimated investment value of 55 billion yuan are all prepared for further cooperation with potential investors, Liu added. The key projects will be focussed on the public bidding for Olympic sports venue construction projects, the Nos. 4, 5, 9 and 10 subway line projects, gas supply projects and environmen-

tal protection related projects.

To date, about 2,000 enterprises from home and abroad have signed on for the conference, including over 40 multinationals and 300-plus state-owned enterprises.

"We will try to release all the detailed information on the 376 projects on our official website as early as next week," said Liu. "Through transparent and public bidding, we will choose those best qualified enterprises to operate these projects, whether they are state-owned or private, domestic or foreign."

(Continued from page 1)

Rinko spokesman Toshiyuki Kawasaki commented, "We believe the court ruling was not an appropriate decision. We'll examine the content with our lawyers and decide whether to appeal." The company, previously known as Niigata Koun, established in 1905, has a registered capital of 1.95 billion yen and is engaged in harbor transportation and real estate, according to its web site.

Meanwhile Osamu Kaneko, one of the lawyers for the plaintiffs, told local media the ruling was historic for recognizing that both the government and private industry should be held accountable for wartime slave labor practices.

"The horrible truth of how men were abducted and forced to work in Japan was made clear. Almost 20 percent died within a few months. "This ruling shows deep understanding of those realities," Kaneko added.

Kohken Tsuchiya, a lawyer representing a group of Chinese plaintiffs who say their relatives were killed in germ warfare waged by Japanese military units in World War II, commented, "This is unusual ... It's a very admirable ruling," adding it could give other judges "courage" to rule against the government.

**A real victory?**

Kang Jian, a lawyer for the 12 plaintiffs, says the ruling is significant in that the court has found Tokyo responsible and the Niigata-based company "guilty of violating civil law, for ignoring the safety of workers by failing to provide adequate basic needs and appropriate management."

"The important thing is it dismisses the defendants' argument that individuals do not have the right to seek compensation for damage caused by the actions of the state under the imperial constitution and that the 20-year statute of limitations on the case had expired," she told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

"One thing we need to pay attention to, is that the verdict will hold true until such time as the government appeals the verdict and a higher court overturns the ruling," Kang said.

"If they appeal, the Japanese government is eliminating a golden opportunity to start healing some wounds and even start building friendships again with its Asian neighbors themselves," she stressed.

Kang said that all the services she and her Japanese colleagues provided the Chinese slave laborers is free. "Their expenses to travel and stay in Japan have all been donated by the Japanese public."

**Big issues**

Sun Lingling, assistant researcher at the Institute of Japanese Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, says that since 1995, there have been 13 similar suits filed in Japan against the Japanese government and companies.

"Most of the claims, however, were denied on the grounds that the statute of limitations for seeking redress under the Japanese Civil Code was 20 years. In some previous cases, judges have acknowledged that the government broke the law but ruled the state could not be made to pay because of a time limit on compensation claims, or because all claims were settled on a state-to-state basis in postwar treaties," she told *Beijing Today* Wednesday.

"The Chinese government in the 1972 communique renounced reparation between the nations, which should not be mistaken as giving up the rights of Chinese individuals to demand compensation for damages they suffered," she said.

Sun says that according to international law, reparation and compensation can both be understood as a legal duty that a defeated country should undertake due to its starting a war, but are actually completely different concepts. "Reparation is a kind of indemnity for damage, especially economic, that a defeated nation has caused to the defeating nation during a war. To be more precise, it is a kind of punishment. Compensation, however, is a kind of remuneration for people and their properties suffering damage due to their nations participating in a war," she said.

Sun argues that the Japanese government's argument that the 1972 communique absolves it of responsibility to pay individual compensation makes plain that it is attempting to evade its obligation as a state.

In regard to the argument invoking the statute of limitations, she points out that the United Nations has made it clear that the time limit does not apply to war crimes.

"The verdict is certain to have a positive effect not only on other on-going Chinese slave laborers compensation lawsuits in Japan, but also on Sino-Japan relation. With deeper and wider communication between the two nations, more such cases will be resolved soon."

## City to Promote Six New IT Industries

By Hou Mingxin

A blueprint for promoting Beijing's IT industry and implementing the goal of doubling its total production value to 300 billion yuan by 2008 has been mapped out and will be put into practice, according to a senior official from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Industrial Development.

"The development of the IT industry in Beijing will mainly focus on three aspects: construction of the development environment; software and integrated circuit industries; and international cooperation in the areas of key industries," Liang Sheng, director of the bureau's Information Industry Department, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

Beijing plans to develop a first-class investment environment within the Fifth Ring Road for investors, Liang said.

According to Liang, software is one of the most preponderant industries in Beijing, but problems still exist in some domestic enterprises, such as small size

and lack of competition. Liang points out that the key problem is getting these products onto the international market. In order to do so, domestic enterprises need to secure core technology and become bigger and stronger.

As for the integrated circuit industry, the blueprint stipulates that Beijing will continue to promote development in the areas of design, manufacture, special facilities and special materials.

This year, the city will strengthen cooperation with international companies in digital TV manufacture, mobile communications, IC card and electronic recognition, computer and web production, intelligent traffic systems and digital cameras.

In order to attract more foreign investment to promote the development of these industries, Beijing plans to provide independent production bases and special sales channels for international companies, Liang said.

He added that Beijing has certain advantages in regard to development of these industries. He gave as examples the fact that digital broadcast technology will be implemented for the 2008 Olympics and the city's huge tourism market potential.

conduct research."

He said the committee would also consider the experience of the tenders relating to the projects they bid. "They are required to have completed at least two projects over the past three years in areas similar to the ones they bid for," he said.

Research is being called for in areas including construction of an emergency system, strategy for the city's development, economic and social development of the mountainous areas, water resources exploration, ecological construction and environment protection.

At present there are no foreign companies or international organizations invited to participate in the bidding. "In fact we welcome them to share with us their experience in these areas."

icals and other dangerous material and pawnshops will be restricted in Beijing municipality.

New slaughterhouses within the area of the Fifth Ring Road, wholesale markets in the downtown area, Zhongguancun Science and Technology Garden and some other areas, large scale supermarkets, shopping malls and wholesale markets with an area of over 10,000 square meters within the Third Ring Road will also be banned.

The white paper predicts that in the coming few years, retailing will be further incorporated; more foreign famous retailers will enter the Beijing market; new industries such as automatic sales and E-business will maintain a high rate of development; logistics will see further improvement; more chain stores will appear; modern circulation enterprises will enter the outskirts areas; exploitation and application of food security-related new technology will become a new focus; and more new information technology will be applied in commerce.

technical cooperation from Hitachi.

At present, Chongqing is dependent on road transportation, and traffic congestion and air pollution are a growing problem. The monorail project, with an estimated investment of 4.3 billion yuan, will connect the city's central six districts, benefitting some 1 million residents.

When completed in 2005, the monorail will be capable of carrying 30,000 passengers per hour at peak times. The 14-station section between Jiaochangkou and Dongwuyuan, approximately 13.5 kilometers, currently under construction, is due to open in June, 2004.

According to Li Xiumin, the monorail is an environmentally friendly transport system, with the benefits of lower construction cost than a subway, occupying minimal area, low noise, and simplified maintenance.

### Public Security Review

Beijing's 110 emergency hotline received 12 percent more calls this week than the preceding week, and 188 criminal suspects have been apprehended after investigations. Break-ins and auto thefts accounted for the majority of reported crimes.

Break-ins mostly occurred in Chaoyang, Haidian, Xuanwu, Shijingshan and Fengtai districts late at night and in the morning. Xinyuanli in Chaoyang, Huayuanli in Haidian and Xinjiekou in Xichen were the most common places for auto thefts to take place, while robberies most frequently occurred at Niujie in Xuanwu, Jiangtai in Chaoyang and Enjizhuang in Haidian.

Robberies have become a key target for police recently. Criminals operating in groups frequently commit crimes in the evenings, between 7 and 9 pm. Young women walking alone were the major targets of such criminals and quiet, out-of-the-way streets were the common places for such robberies to take place.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

## Beijing Tops Land Price Ranking

By Hou Mingxin

In a survey of average land prices in major Chinese cities in 2003, Beijing tops the list with the country's most expensive real estate.

The Ministry of Land and Resources survey, published last Friday, ranks Shanghai in second place, followed by Hangzhou, Nanjing, Chengdu, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Shenzhen and Guiyang. Urumqi comes last on the list.

According to the ministry, average land prices rose steadily in major cities last year and will continue to rise in 2004.

In 2003, the average land price in major cities was 1,166 yuan per square meter, a 92 yuan increase on 2002. The average price of com-

mercial land was 1,919 yuan per square meter, industrial-use land was 494 yuan per square meter, while that of housing land was 1,103 yuan per square meter.

The survey shows that land prices in the Yangtze River Delta area are significantly higher than those of the Pearl River Delta area.

It also indicates that land prices in developed regions saw relatively low growth rates in 2003. Average land prices in Beijing and Shanghai grew by 3 and 5 percent respectively, significantly slower than in 2002. Meanwhile, Guangzhou and Shenzhen saw a negative growth rate last year. The ministry says the result shows the land market and pricing mechanisms in those cities are maturing.

## High Investment Growth Sparks Warning

By Zhang Bo

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, for the first two months of 2004, China's fixed asset investment increased by 53 percent, double the increase of 2003. The figures emphasize the urgency of the need for the government to reign in investment in order to ensure the smooth and healthy development of the national economy.

While the increase marks an overall record high since 1994, some industries have seen significantly faster growth than the average, for

example the growth of investment in the steel and iron industry has hit 172.6 percent. Meanwhile the average investment growth of local governments (64.9 percent) surpassed that of the central government (12.1 percent).

A report by Xinhua News Agency on Monday states that the dangerously high level of investment is largely the result of incorrect development concepts held by some local government officials, who mistakenly believe investment to be the sole source of economic growth.

## Competition Starts for New National Museum Design

By Yi Yi

A design bid campaign for the new Chinese National Museum, on the east side of Tian'anmen Square, was officially launched last Friday.

Eleven design institutes have been confirmed as qualifying to bid, from among 55 institutes from 13 countries and regions that have registered since February.

Their designs are due to be submitted by the end of June, and the winner of the tenders will be announced in late July.

The existing National Museum, built in the 1950s, is now incapable of meeting the demands of exhibition and protection of its collection of 610,000 cultural relics.

Yang Yingfa, director of New Venue Construction

## State Expressway Plan Completed

By Yi Yi

Planning of China's national expressway network has finished and the blueprint is awaiting examination and approval by the State Council, *Beijing Times* reported last Friday.

A trans-city expressway network will connect the metropolises of the Yangtze River Delta, the Pearl River Delta and the Bohai Sea Economic Zone. This expressway network will reduce production cost in China, Li Xinghua, vice director of the Comprehensive Planning Department of the Min-

istry of Transportation, was quoted as saying.

According to the blueprint, China will establish a network comprising of seven radiating expressways, nine north-south expressways and 18 east-west expressways, with a total planned length of 85,000 kilometers. The seven radiating expressways, connecting Beijing with seven key provincial capital cities, total 18,000 kilometers in length. The network will connect 319 cities, including all the provincial capitals, as well as Hong Kong and Macao.



# Lenovo Plans Global Splash with Olympic Partnership

By Zhao Hongyi

Asked whether Lenovo can bear the \$65 million cost of being an Olympic sponsor, Yang Yuanqing, chief executive officer of the China's largest PC manufacturer, exclaimed without hesitation: "No problem!"

Yang made the confident remark on Monday in an interview with China Central Television, or CCTV. Last Friday, Lenovo signed a milestone deal with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to become the first Chinese company, and the eleventh company worldwide, to join The Olympic Partner (TOP) program for the 2005-08 period. The deal includes sponsorship of both the 2006 Turin Winter Games and the 2008 Beijing Summer Games.

Lenovo is the last member of the sponsoring group, replacing IBM, which withdrew after a decade of cooperation. The other ten members of the group are Coca Cola, Atos Origin, GE, John Hancock Life, Kodak, McDonald, Panasonic, Samsung, Swatch and Visa.

For the potentially lucrative privilege,

Lenovo has to contribute \$65 million to the IOC over the four years and spend two to three times that amount on commercial ads and promotions.

Beijing-based Lenovo, formerly known as Legend, produced three million computers and earned 25 billion yuan in sales volume last year. The past few years, the company has spent an average of two percent of its sales volume on market promotion.

"Though we cannot compete against giants like Coca Cola, which has annual turnover of \$50 billion, or even relatively small companies like Samsung, which earns \$30 billion, the average annual \$13 million contribution to the IOC for partners will not be a burden for us," Yang said in the interview.

Yang admitted that the group's intent in signing the deal was to promote its brand worldwide and improve its software technologies.

Though Lenovo ranks first in China, it has little presence or influence outside the country. Last year, the company export-

ed just \$100 million worth of products, mostly spare parts and components.

"We hope by raising our brand reputation worldwide, we can export more final products bearing the Lenovo brand," Yang said.

Part of Lenovo's \$65 million contribution to the IOC can come in the form of products, such as computers, servers, handheld electronic devices, network security products and data networking equipment, as well as the provision of technical support for Olympic committees and delegations in more than 200 countries and regions.

Over 4,500 Lenovo desktop computers are already being used by the Turin Games organizing committee, according to committee Deputy Chairwoman Evalina Christillin.

"The Games require highly reliable hardware and software products. Lenovo will have to quickly overcome technological hurdles that emerge, which should result in the rapid improvement of its products," said Huang Yong, senior vice president of the do-



Lenovo Chairman Liu Chuanzhi and Gerhard Heiberg, chairman of the IOC Marketing Commission, sealed the deal in Beijing on March 26.

Photo by BQB

mestic information technology market research company CCID Consulting.

The sponsorship deal could also boost Lenovo's sales in the domestic market, as its products can carry the coveted IOC logo.

In words that have become like a mantra for the 2008 Games, Lenovo Chairman Liu Chuanzhi said at the signing ceremony, "It is both a great opportunity and a great challenge for us."

## Fuel Oil Futures Trading OK'd to Resume

By Xiao Yingying

The State Council has given its stamp of approval to an application filed by the Shanghai Futures Exchanges China to reopen fuel oil futures trading, the *Economic Observer* reported Saturday.

Jiang Yang, general manager of the exchange, told the paper the exchange was negotiating with China's three largest oil companies, China National Offshore Oil Corp, China National Petroleum Corp and Sinopec, but did not say when futures trading would start.

The Shanghai Futures Exchanges has been competing with the Dalian Futures Exchanges in northern China's Liaoning Province for the rights to

reopen fuel oil futures trading for years. Compared with crude oil and gasoline, fuel oil in China is relatively market-oriented and prices are closely pegged to those on the world market.

China opened oil futures in Beijing and Shanghai in 1993, but closed the market two years later to pull the plug on overheated speculation. At present, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) sets the benchmark prices for gasoline and diesel oil based on an average of prices on the markets of Singapore, Rotterdam and New York.

Last year, China surpassed Japan to become the world's second-largest oil consumer, trailing only the United States.

## Ping An Insurance Marches into Banking Industry

By Xiao Rong

With the quiet opening of Ping An Bank in south China's Fujian Province last week, Ping An Insurance (Group) Company of China, the country's second-largest life insurer, took an important step towards becoming a financial holdings conglomerate.

The new bank was founded based on the Fujian Asia Bank, jointly acquired last December by China Ping An Trust & Investment Co., a subsidiary of Ping An Insurance Group, and the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp (HSBC).

Since that agreement was signed, however, Ping An has invested an additional \$23 million, bringing its share of the bank's total capital up to \$50 million, or 73 percent.

HSBC China Operations Manager Ye Diqi confirmed the opening of the new bank to the *International Financial Times* last Thursday, but the Shenzhen-based Ping An Insurance Group has not issued any comment on the matter.

"It's not the appropriate time for Ping An to release any related information to the media," Wang Hongxia from Ping An's public relations department told *Beijing Today* Tuesday.

Since its establishment in 1988, Ping An Insurance has developed into a financial holdings group engaged in the insurance,

investment trust, securities and banking fields.

Such integration is common among financial service providers overseas, but for a long time China followed an opposite road, resisting the convergence of the banking, insurance and securities industries. Last December's revision of the Law of Commercial Banks, however, loosened previous restrictions and opened the door for commercial banks to enter the securities and investment trust sectors.

Zheng Wei, vice director of the department of risk management and insurance at Beijing University said, "Financial service integration is the trend of the future in the operation of the domestic financial industry. For that reason, Ping An's move will be an interesting experiment in promoting partnerships between insurers and banks to developing superior products and services."



Ping An is at a turning point in its business expansion plan.

Photo by Photocom



"Taste Europe with your chopsticks!" EU Commissioner for Agriculture Franz Fischler plugs Danish cookies and French wine at a press conference held in Beijing last Thursday.

Photo by Qian Bingge

## EU Tells China, "Eat Me!"

By Yi Yi

EU Commissioner for Agriculture Franz Fischler arrived in the capital last Thursday at the lead of a business delegation in China to pitch the splendors of European food and drink products. During its six-day stay, the team of 25 European executives visited Beijing and Shanghai in order to investigate the potential of China's huge market and foster better mutual understanding of agricultural issues between Europe and China.

"We want to show Chinese consumers what a rich variety of quality food and drink Europe has to offer," Fischler told the press. "I hope the Chinese can use chopsticks to taste the delicacies of Europe."

From Finnish cheese to French champagne and Irish stout to Spanish olive oil, many of the EU products on hand were making their China debuts.

Paul Bamberger, vice president of Vranken-

Pommery Monopole Group, France's second-largest champagne producer, said that while the company only sold less than 1,000 bottles of champagne in this country last year, "Annual sales of champagne in China now exceed 100,000 bottles, still a small number considering the size of the market. This market presents enormous business opportunities for our company."

Since 1978, EU-China trade has increased more than 40-fold and reached over 129 billion euro in 2003. China is now the second most important trading partner for the EU, after the US.

In terms of gross business volume, the EU should move in front of the US this year and Japan next year to become China's No. 1 trading partner. "This will give China more room to maneuver in handling international economic and political affairs," noted Franz Jessen, deputy head of the EU delegation.

## B&Q Diving Deeper into Local Market

By Shan Jinliang

David Wei, China region president of British building material retailer B&Q announced on Tuesday in Beijing that the company would open 10 more stores in the capital by 2008.

B&Q became the first foreign building material company to enter the domestic market when it opened an outlet in Shanghai in 1999. The company's first store in Beijing was established in Sijiqing last December. Two new stores are set to open in Chaoyang District over the next two weeks.

Wei said it would take five years for China's building material retail market to shift from domination by small venues to supermarkets, a process that took 20 years in Western countries. He noted that more building material markets closed in Beijing in 2003 than in any previous year.

Apart from domestic rivals, the company is set to face new international competition, as Germany-based OBI and French company Leroy Merlin are currently selecting sites for their first stores in Beijing, expected to open by the end of the year.

## Fund Managers Hopeful about Stock Market Prospects

By Zhao Hongyi

Annual reports issued by domestic fund management firms indicate that after three years of stagnation, domestic stock markets could show an up-turn this year.

By the end of March, 13 fund managers issued more than 50 annual reports on funds they operate, accounting for nearly 60 percent of all funds in the market.

Among the factors accounting for the optimistic predictions are promises made by the central government in February to build a healthy, growing capital market, the continued robust growth of the national economy and the sufficient supply of cash in the market.

"Though the central bank has lowered the money supply this year, the securities market is seeing an increasing inflow of cash," said Wang Junhui, manager of the Fenghe Fund. Wang attributed that inflow to the close-to-zero interest rates offered on accounts at commercial banks and the excellent performance of the securities market last year.

## US Envoy Coming to Discuss Yuan

By Zhao Hongyi

The US government is planning to send an envoy to Beijing to discuss the value of China's renminbi, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported on Sunday.

The decision to send the representative was made during talks between US Treasury Secretary John Snow and governor of China's central bank Zhou Xiaochuan last Friday in Washington. According to the *Beijing Youth Daily* report, Snow explained the reason for sending the envoy as, "China has agreed to build a flexible exchange rate mechanism for the renminbi."

Snow admitted that a prompt increase of renminbi value was not a good idea. "The best way is to keep consultation with China and provide necessary assistance to set up a floating exchange rate mechanism," he said.

## Shenzhen to Open Small Business Board

By Xiao Yingying

The Shengzhen Stock Exchange will open a second board for small and medium sized enterprises, the first of its kind on the mainland, according to sources from the National Development and Reform Commission on Monday.

The *Economic Observer* reported the board had been approved by the commission on March 26 and was expected to open in April or May. The board is intended as a convenient platform for start-ups to attract investment.

## American Express, ICBC to Issue Credit Cards

By Zhao Hongyi

American Express and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) signed an agreement in Beijing on Tuesday to issue dual-currency credit cards for Chinese consumers.

David House, American Express group president said at the following press conference that the cards could debut as early as this autumn, depending on the speed of necessary approval from the China Banking Regulatory Commission.

ICBC President Jiang Jianqing said the bank would issue at least four million credit cards bearing the American Express logo in the next 10 years.

## Citibank Opens Individual Services in Capital

By Xiao Yingying

Citibank opened individual renminbi banking services in Beijing last Thursday, the bank's President and Chief Operating Officer Robert Willumstad announced that day in the capital.

Though Citibank was the first foreign bank to offer such services in Shanghai, several foreign banks have already received licenses to run foreign currency services in Beijing. Citibank's Guangzhou branch is expected to launch similar services later this year.

## Capital Airport Expanding with 2008 in Sight

By Zhao Hongyi

Construction of the 19.45 billion yuan worth (approximately \$2.3 billion) third terminal at Capital International Airport began on March 28.

The project includes a third runway, the third terminal building which will house 94 gates, a cargo handling zone and auxiliary structures. When the terminal is completed by the end of 2007, it will give the airport a capacity to handle 60 million passengers, 1.8 million tons of cargo and 500,000 flights each year. The new runway will also be large enough to accommodate new superjumbo planes, such as the Airbus A380.

An international consortium composed of the Netherlands' Naco and UK-based Foster have been chosen to build the new terminal, according to Xinhua.





# OPEC Tightens Screw

Vienna, March 31 (Reuters) - OPEC Wednesday forged ahead with tighter oil supply curbs, deaf to consumer country complaints about crude prices near 13-year highs.

The Bush administration, in an election year, had pressed OPEC to lift export restrictions to help control prices at the pump and prevent energy inflation slowing economic growth.

Delegates said cartel powerhouse Saudi Arabia led the push for implementing cuts of one million barrels a day or four percent from April 1, as first agreed in Algiers in February.

Saudi Arabia and a few other OPEC countries have ordered slightly lower April volumes, moving down towards the new combined limit of 23.5 million barrels daily.

“The Saudis have gone from being a reliable OPEC price dove to OPEC’s arch price hawk,” said independent energy consultant Mehdi Varzi.

“That’s because of the demands of the Saudi budget. They need higher and higher oil prices every year to meet current expenditure for a larger and larger population.”

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry blamed high gas prices on what he said was

Bush’s failure at diplomacy.

Not only has George Bush let the gas prices spiral out of control, but he’s squandered America’s ability to do anything about it,” the Democrat said.

(Andrew Mitchell)

### Analyst’s Take:

The recent production cuts in September, February and the end of March show the power OPEC still has over oil prices on the world market. But there are limits. OPEC cannot push the price as high as they want.

Oil prices have increased from \$25.48/barrel three months ago to \$32.61, much higher than

OPEC’s supposed ceiling of \$28.

OPEC has 79.4 percent of the world’s total oil deposits, 1/3 of the production and 55 percent of the total oil transacted. Therefore, OPEC’s impact on the world oil market is inevitable.

OPEC has been more sophisticated in using “production cuts” to protect the price. Non-OPEC oil producers have total oil deposits for 15 years exploration, while OPEC members have a deposits that will last for 97 years. So the world oil market is becoming more and more dependent on OPEC.

But, in the short run, technology improvements enable the increase of oil production, thus

counterbalancing the ability of OPEC to dominate the market.

An increasing number of countries have built up their own strategic oil reserves. Energy saving technologies and oil-replaceable energy exploration are advancing. These efforts will, sooner or later, weaken the influence of OPEC.

Last but not least, OPEC member countries usually raise their own oil production, particularly when the prices are high. OPEC has not found any effective measures to stop such violations.

— Wang Jiansheng, senior reporter on the world economy, Xinhua News Agency

An angry miner with dynamite strapped to his chest blew himself up in Bolivia’s congress Tuesday, killing two police officers and wounding 10 others, authorities said.

The man declared he was protesting at the loss of his pension.

Thousands of Bolivian miners have lost their jobs in recent years, as the government has opened the country’s vast reserves of gold and other mineral deposits to private mining companies.

A policeman takes cover while a second bomb left by a miner explodes outside the National Congress in La Paz, Bolivia.

(AFP Photo)



## Britain Joins Hands with Libya

Tripoli, March 27 (Reuters) - British Prime Minister Tony Blair arrived in Libya Thursday offering a “hand in partnership” to Muammar Gaddafi, once reviled as a pariah in the West.

Blair has promised not to “forget the pain of the past” after the 1988 Lockerbie bombing which killed 270 people and accusations that Gaddafi armed Irish Republican Army guerrillas.

But he said Libya should be ushered back into the international fold for turning its back on banned weapons and paying compensation for Lockerbie.

Even before Blair touched down, gains to British business from the diplomatic thaw were being notched up. An official traveling on the plane to Tripoli told reporters oil giant Royal Dutch/Shell had won a \$200 million gas exploration deal with Libya.

Blair arrived at Maitiga airport, a former US military base on the outskirts of Tripoli, to be greeted by Prime Minister Shokri Ghanem.

Blair is the first British leader to visit Libya since Winston Churchill in World War II.

(Madeline Chambers)

### Analyst’s Take:

Aside from the political pressure to ease its relations with Muslim countries on the issue of anti-terrorism, Blair’s trip to Libya brings commercial benefits for Britain.

During Blair’s visit to Libya, the British-Dutch company Shell signed a \$200 million agreement with Libya to explore natural gas in the country.

Shell is still negotiating with Libya on another \$1 billion-worth of oil and gas projects. Agreements are

expected to be reached within the year.

The two countries agreed that the UK will help modernize Libya’s army and air force.

Under the project, the UK will provide training courses to Libyan military forces and send military advisors to Libya.

BAE Systems, the UK-based military arms manufacturer and dealer, is negotiating with Libya on a number of projects, such as airport construction and commercial airplane sales.

— Shi Xiaohui, People’s Daily reporter in London

## Tackling Political Corruption

Where did the money go? - The top 10			
	Head of government	Estimates of funds embezzled	GDP per capita
1. Mohamed Suharto	President of Indonesia, 1967-98	\$ 15 - 35 billion	\$ 695
2. Ferdinand Marcos	President of the Philippines, 1972-86	\$ 5 to 10 billion	\$ 912
3. Mobutu Sese Seko	President of Zaire, 1965-97	\$ 5 billion	\$ 99
4. Sani Abacha	President of Nigeria, 1993-98	\$ 2 to 5 billion	\$ 319
5. Slobodan Milosevic	President of Yugoslavia, 1989-2000	\$ 1 billion	n/a
6. Jean-Claude Duvalier	President of Haiti, 1971-86	\$ 300 - 800 million	\$ 460
7. Alberto Fujimori	President of Peru, 1990-2000	\$ 600 million	\$ 2,051
8. Pavlo Lazarenko	Prime Minister of Ukraine, 1996-97	\$ 114 - 200 million	\$ 766
9. Arnoldo Alemán	President of Nicaragua, 1997-2002	\$ 100 million	\$ 490
10. Joseph Estrada	President of the Philippines, 1998-2001	\$ 78 - 80 million	\$ 912

London, March 25 (TI) - “Political corruption undermines the hopes for prosperity and stability of developing countries, and damages the global economy,” said Peter Eigen, chairman of the Berlin-based Transparency International (TI) at the launching ceremony for TI’s “Global Corruption Report 2004” in London today.

The report stressed that abuse of political power for private gains deprives the most needy of vital public services, creating despair that breeds conflict and violence.

“The problem must be tackled at the national and international level,” the report said.

The report, with a special focus on political corruption, is a call to bring integrity and accountability into governance, to stop bribery by multinational companies, and to curb the flow of stolen assets into secret bank accounts in the west.

The report details funds allegedly embezzled by political leaders of the past two decades. Mohamed Suharto, president of Indonesia

from 1967-1998, is alleged to have stolen \$15-35 billion in a country where the GDP per capita hovers at around \$700.

“Political corruption deprives millions of health care, education and the prospects of a sustainable future,” said TI Zimbabwe chairman John Makumbe at the launch.

“The fight against corruption requires sustained political will at the highest levels, and not only in countries recovering from the legacy of Moi, Suharto, Duvalier or Abacha.”



## Bush Talks Up Economy, Finally

Washington, March 31 (AP) - Dueling with Democratic rival John Kerry over the economy, President Bush was promoting lower taxes and free-trade policies Tuesday in Wisconsin, where 80,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost since he took office.

Bush lost the state by fewer than 6,000 votes in 2000 and it is regarded as a battleground again this year. Kerry holds a 46 percent to 43 percent lead over Bush in the state, according to a poll released Friday by the American Research Group.

The economic debate is going to the heart of the presidential campaign.

“This administration has one economic policy for America - 3 million jobs lost and driving gas prices towards \$3 a gallon,” Kerry said Monday at a jobs training center in Sacramento, California. Vice President Dick Cheney shot back that Kerry was “one of the most reliable pro-tax votes in the Senate.”

The trip was Bush’s ninth to Wisconsin, where economic anxieties run high. The president had only one appearance, a speech at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center.

Bush’s message was that America must resist “isolationist policies that would close America off to new markets because we need to open markets and create jobs at home,” White House deputy press secretary Claire Buchan said.

To buttress Bush’s case, the White House said Wisconsin exported \$11.5 billion worth of goods last year, and that tax cuts enacted during Bush’s administration have saved money for two million taxpayers in the state.

(Terence Hunt)

### Analyst’s Take:

Kerry’s economic recovery initiative includes various measures: to revive American manufacturing industry by helping it compete with overseas rivals; to create 10 million jobs in the next four years; to revise corporate tax laws to prevent big companies from outsourcing; to cut the federal government’s budget; and to improve the social welfare system.

Bush says he will reduce overall taxation by \$2 trillion to increase jobs, spend \$500 million in labor training and re-employment and improve the social welfare system.

Bush still lacks a clear, full and sustainable economic recovery plan. This has become a weak point seized on by his rival in the presidential race.

— Chen Wei, China News Services, New York

## Microsoft Cuts Xbox Price

Los Angeles, March 31 (Reuters) - Microsoft Corp. on Monday cut the price of its Xbox video game console, in a move seen as a boost to the game publishing industry ahead of its biggest gathering of the year in May.

Microsoft cut the Xbox price to \$149.99 from \$179.99 and also trimmed prices on software such as the karaoke game “Xbox Music Mixer,” “Project Gotham Racing 2” and “Crimson Skies: High Road to Revenge.”

(Ben Berkowitz)



ABC Photo

## Titillating T-shirts Tossed

Melbourne, March 31 (abc.net.au) - The Australian government yesterday accused clothing retailer Westco of breaching state and federal laws by ordering young staff to wear “provocative and suggestive” T-shirts.

Female staff of Westco throughout Australia were told to wear the cotton-lycra tops bearing the words “Stop pretending you don’t want me” in lime green print across the chest. They complain that they have been sexually harassed after being forced to wear tight T-shirts bearing the provocative slogan.

(Bridie Smith)

## EMI Axes Artists, 1,500 Jobs

London, March 31 (Reuters) - Music giant EMI will cut 1,500 jobs, one fifth of its recording artists, and outsource most of its CD and DVD manufacturing to reduce costs, the British company said on Wednesday.

The sweeping measures at the world’s third largest music company -- home to the Rolling Stones, Coldplay and Norah Jones -- come amid continued strife in the recording industry, beset by piracy and declining music sales.

(Adam Pasick)

## Viacom to Develop Gay TV Network

Mexico City, March 31 (AP) - Viacom is in preliminary discussions to launch a gay cable network in the United States, its chairman and chief executive said Tuesday.

In Mexico City for the launch of VH1 Latin America, Sumner Redstone told reporters that Viacom has been in discussions with US cable operators about the possibility. He called the would-be network “a good channel for them, and a good channel for Viacom.”

(Will Weissert)

## Starbucks Unveils Growth Plan

Seattle, March 31 (AP) - Starbucks is opening coffee shops at the rate of about 3 1/2 a day worldwide, and that figure could increase, chief executive Orin Smith told shareholders at the company’s annual meeting Tuesday.

The long-term plan is to have about 25,000 stores worldwide - more than triple the nearly 8,000 stores the coffee retailer has right now.

To accommodate those plans, the company, which already employs more than 80,000 people, is hiring 250 people a day.

(Allison Linn)



# Nation's First Ovum Bank to Nest in Capital

By Sun Ming

The Beijing University First Hospital has announced plans to open the country's first ovum bank, a move that would make China the second nation in the world, following the United States, to have such a facility.

"We have mastered the most advanced techniques for freezing human ova," Li Xiaohong, director of the hospital's Procreation and Genetics Center, told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday. "Mastering the tech-

niques associated with freezing women's eggs is a technological and scientific breakthrough for China."

The hospital has not set a specific date for the opening of the bank, though preparations have begun.

The function of an ovum bank is to safely freeze eggs from women who do not want to have children in the near future but are worried that the quality of their ovum could deteriorate as they age. The bank can also provide safe keeping

for eggs of women doctors, astronauts, chemists and others who fear the health of their ova could be affected by radiation and other outside dangers.

Zhang Xiao, a researcher at the center, told *Beijing Today* that collected ova would first be dehydrated and frozen and then stored at sub-zero temperatures in barrels filled with liquid nitrogen.

"The temperature of the liquid nitrogen is as low as -198 degrees Celsius. Ova can be stored for centuries in such condi-

tions," Zhang said, but continued that the bank would not store any eggs for more than 10 years.

The ovum bank would also give hope to infertile couples that want children by giving them access to fertile ovum.

The hospital has announced that last year it provided frozen donated ova to seven women, all of whom got pregnant. A woman from Zhejiang Province, who received a frozen ovum from the hospital last August, is due to give birth to twins in May.

## Bear Sparks Fear in Farmers



A Yangtaizi resident holds up a chicken presumed killed by the bear. Photo by Chen Wei

By Dong Nan

Sightings of a roaming bear have worried residents of Yangtaizi Village in rural Changping District over the past few weeks.

On the morning of March 23, farmer Li Yonghe went out to tend his fields as usual. He looked up and saw an enormous black animal coming towards him down a mountain

slope. As the animal drew near, Li realized it was a bear. Fortunately, the beast went charging away as soon as it saw the farmer.

Later the same day, Li's neighbor Ma Jingjun discovered several of his chickens had been killed, some completely torn apart. He noticed tracks the size and shape of bear prints in the ground nearby.

When locals called in to report the bear sightings, local police and experts from the Beijing Forestry Bureau were immediately dispatched to the scene. One expert who would not give his name told *Beijing Youth Daily* on March 25 that judging from the size of the footprints, the roaming bear might be a cub.

As of this Thursday, experts had not spotted the bear themselves, so they had no new information on its origins. The Badaling Wild Animal World and the Bear Paradise, two zoos in northern Beijing that keep many bears, have reported that none of their animals are missing.

According to zoologists and bear keepers at the Badaling Wild Animal World, bears tend to be shy of people, but can be drawn to populated areas by food. They emphasized that anyone who sees the bear should call the police for help, as the animals can be very dangerous if threatened.

## Marrow Donors Offered Insurance Incentive

By Xiao Yingying

Local man and bone marrow donor Yang Xi received a 350,000-yuan insurance policy as a reward from the Ping An Insurance Company of China on Monday. According to the Red Cross Society of China, he was the first to benefit from a new incentive campaign intended to get more people to voluntarily donate in order to build up the China Marrow Bank, a database of marrow stem cell samples.

According to a report in *Beijing Youth Daily* on Tuesday, people who have donated since January 1, 2003 or give bone marrow before December 12, 2006 are eligible to receive similar policies from Ping An. The free premiums include 50,000-yuan of coverage for serious diseases and 30,00 yuan for accidental injury.

Bone marrow regenerates quickly and donations have little or no effect on donors' health. However, general public fear and misunderstanding of the process has resulted in only 110,000 people nationwide contributing to the China Marrow Bank.

Bone marrow transplants are the most effect known means of curing leukemia, a type of cancer developed by nearly 40,000 people a year in China that annually kills 40,000 to 50,000, mostly children and teenagers.

The China Marrow Bank is expected to expand its marrow database to contain 500,000 samples before 2010, *Beijing Youth Daily* reported.



International superstar Jacky Chan led the troops in the conservation project at the Badaling Great Wall on Saturday.

Photo by Cheng Yuyang

## Stars, Students Build Green Great Wall

By Xiao Yingying

At the foot of the Badaling section of the Great Wall, 200 college students joined many celebrities from entertainment and business circles Saturday in a series of activities aimed at promoting environmental protection and ecological conservation.

Famous stars including Jacky Chan, cross-talker Jiang Kun and TV person-

ality Yang Lan, as well as CEOs of major domestic companies such as Sina and Kejiang, participated in the repair of the Great Wall and planting of trees.

The project was organized by the China Environmental Culture Promotion Society, a non-profit organization sponsored by the State Environment Protection Administration. Pan Yue, head of the organization and deputy

director of the state Environmental Protection Bureau, said 100,000 college students nationwide were taking part in environmental protection and conservation activities connected to the Green Great Wall project.

The mission of that project, according to Pan, is to strengthen environmental awareness, ecological protection and public welfare.

## Alleged Lottery Forgery Sparks Fury



The Lius held a press conference at their home on Saturday.

Photo provided by Huashang Daily

By Dong Nan

Fate has taken a few unexpected twists of late for 18-year-old Liu Liang of Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. He won the top prize in a regional lottery of a BMW sedan, but soon after was not allowed to claim his trophy because lottery authorities deemed his winning ticket was a forgery.

On the morning of March 23, the Shaanxi Sports Lottery Center announced that Liu was the holder of the

winning ticket, meaning he had won a BMW car and 12,000 yuan. The lottery was based on familiar player cards, and the winning ticket was for the king of clubs, or "club K."

Liu wanted to drive away in the car immediately, but was told that he would have to wait a day, because the lottery organizers had yet to pay for the BMW and he had to cover the 3,000 yuan notarization fee. That evening, however, lottery employees noticed that Liu's ticket had signs it had been altered from "club 2" to "club k."

On March 25, Liu and his father arrived at the lottery center with 3,000 yuan, but they were not allowed to take the car. Liu became angry and denied altering his ticket.

He then climbed atop a 13-meter-high billboard outside the center and screamed that he would jump if he did not get his BMW as thousands crowded around to watch.

The police arrived on the scene and,

along with his father, managed to talk him down after one hour.

At a press conference held last Friday, the Shaanxi Sports Lottery Center formally announced that the winning ticket was a fake, as confirmed by the National Sports Lottery Bureau.

Liu's family responded by holding their own press conference at their home the next day. Liu Zhitao, Liu's uncle, swore on his nephew's behalf that the ticket had not been altered, and if it had it had nothing to do with Liu. "All we want is fair treatment," he said.

Liu Liang said, "The center is acting unfairly. They have cheated us lottery players."

"Liu Liang's lottery ticket was accepted by center employees when he first gave it to them," said Gan Jun, a Shanghai lawyer, as quoted in the Xi'an-based *Huashang Daily*. "Only after the ticket was out of Liu's hands did the center call it a fake. That is not legally acceptable evidence."



Photo by Yuan Yi

By Shan Jinliang

The successful transplant of a 300-year-old Chinese scholar tree, or *huaishu*, has overturned an even more ancient Chinese proverb, "Trees die after being replanted but men can survive."

On Monday, a team of seven local gardening experts appraised the tree two years after it was moved to its new location. According to a report in the *Beijing Evening News* on Tuesday, the experts said the replant was a complete success unlikely to be replicated because the city plan is normally adjusted to accommodate such ancient trees.

In 2001, at its original location in the Dongzhimen area of Dongcheng District, the tree was on the brink of death, with a large

hole in its base. It stood directly in the way of construction of the Dongzhimen transportation hub, prompting the district's greenification team to move it 120 meters to the northeast in January 2002.

"To make sure we did not harm the tree, we used technology and equipment for subway construction to replant it," said Lu Ping, a public-relations official with the Dongcheng District Gardening Bureau in a telephone interview with *Beijing Today* on Wednesday. "The one-month-plus job cost 900,000 yuan, far more than it would have with usual replanting methods."

"The tree grew well in 2003, but the real test was this year, as only after two years can botanists tell if a replanting has gone well," he added.

## Bomb Threat Closes Carrefour for Three Hours

By Chen Ying

An anonymous bomb threat called into to the Carrefour store in the Fangyuan Building on Baishiqiao Lu in Haidian District forced the store to shut its doors for three hours last Friday.

"Our office received the threat at 5 pm. A man said over the phone that there was a bomb planted in the store," Zhao Peng, manager of the store's public relations department, was quoted as saying in a *Star Daily* report on Saturday.

A store employee quickly called the police, who arrived 10 minutes later. A yellow police line was strung around the store as customers inside streamed out the doors and crowded outside the building.

"I was in line to pay when an announcement was made over the broadcast system that there was something wrong with the store's electrical system. The cashiers stopped taking money and everyone was quickly evacuated," recalled a man surnamed Li, as quoted in *Star Daily*.

The police conducted a thorough search of the premises using dogs for two hours, but did not find any traces of explosives or other unusual matter by 8:08 pm.

The store reopened at 8:30 pm and closed at its normal time of 10 pm. The case is under continuing investigation.

## Murder Ruled Out in Infamous Accident

By Sun Ming

After conducting over two-months of thorough investigations, authorities in Heilongjiang Province have concluded that a fatal traffic accident in Harbin that caused a nationwide uproar was the result of poor driving, not intent to kill.

The results of the investigation were released by the Heilongjiang Provincial Procuratorate last Friday.

Su Xiuwen, 45, killed one person and injured 12 others when she drove her BMW sedan into a crowd in Harbin in October last year.

Su claimed it was an accident, but many people suspected it was a case of road rage, and therefore murder.

Earlier that day, victim Liu Zhongxia and her husband accidentally scratched a side mirror on Su's car as they drove by on their tractor. Su jumped out of the car and scolded the couple, attracting a crowd of curious passers-by. She then got back into her seat, started the ignition and drove straight into the tractor, killing Liu instantly.

On December 20 last year, the Harbin Daoli District People's Court ruled that the incident was an accident caused by Su's poor driving, not an intentional crime. Su was sentenced to two years' imprisonment with a three-year reprieve.

News of the verdict quickly spread around the country and sparked outrage as rumors circulated that Su was related to a high-ranking provincial official. Internet chatrooms were filled with angry speculation that Su received a light sentence because of her wealth and connections.

*Beijing Today* first reported on the story on January 16, six days after an investigative group organized by Heilongjiang Provincial Procuratorate began to look into the case.

Su said that the accident was a result of her mistakenly stepping on the accelerator, not the brake pedal. Investigators also could not substantiate the claims that Su had relations with high-ranking officials.



Su Xiuwen



By Shan Jinliang

It was an unusual case for Yanta District People's Intermediate Court in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province on March 25. The suspect was standing in court wearing a white mask and rubber gloves and the bailiffs were keeping their distance. It was because the defendant, Mu, had AIDS.

The hearing wasn't even conducted in the court but in an adjoining interrogation room. The two policeman were also wearing masks and gloves. They had decided not to handcuff the suspect. "We were afraid the steel handcuffs might cut his skin," one of the policemen said after the trial. The court said they were just trying to avoid any possible harm to others during Mu's trial, but some have suggested that the lengths the court went to reveal ignorance and discrimination against AIDS sufferers.

Mu had got involved in a fight and had killed his opponent. When he was first sent to the detention house in Yanta District last year, the staff were frightened. The detention office organized special training relating to AIDS for the staff and knowledge was also passed on to the other criminals in detention at the time.

Xi'an-based *Huashang Daily* reported on March 27 that there were two other people sharing a cell with Mu. When asked if he was scared about living next to an AIDS sufferer, one of Mu's roommates said, "No. It's not easy to become infected by AIDS, and he behaved well."

However, the court was still nervous about Mu. Ma Jianguo, the judge at Mu's hearing, admitted the staff were joking about not using the pen used by Mu to sign his name.

"People will ask, is our health more important than that of Premier Wen Jiabao, who shook hands with AIDS patients? People may know about AIDS, but that doesn't mean their attitudes have changed. Even judges have some concerns about this type of situation," he said.

"Our extra measures do not

# Don't Stand So Close to Him



The court felt masks would help reduce the risk of infection from AIDS.

Photos provided by *Huashang Daily*

**'This shows they had little understanding about AIDS, and it also has a negative effect on the rest of society and attitudes towards AIDS among the public. The government and the media should be obliged to tackle this discrimination.'**

— Yang Shaogang

but I know what they did was not necessary.

**Zhang Libin**, an attorney with an international law firm in Beijing

When hearing a case in the court, the judge has to decide on any special measures required. He or she must balance the possible danger to members of the public and possible damage to the suspect.

The judge would probably care more about the public than the suspect's personal interests, or dignity. Although medical science has confirmed that spitting cannot infect people with AIDS, the judge still has the right to take any special measures considered necessary.

**An expert** from the Labor Education Bureau, Ministry of Justice

It is a must for judicial departments to take measures to prevent any possible danger, but the measures should be appropriate. I think this matter, although it raises issues that need to be dealt with urgently, did not represent discrimination or prejudice towards AIDS patients.

First, it should be stressed that special treatment for AIDS-infected suspects is not discrimination. If the police were infected by these suspects, who would be responsible? What's more, if the police got infected with AIDS, it would have a huge negative impact on the work with AIDS-infected suspects.

The judiciary should form a unified standard to deal with AIDS-infected suspects including equipment and measures, such as special cells. Detailed rules should also be established for damages relating to AIDS.

**Yang Shaogang**, an attorney with Shanghai Jiuhui Law Firm

Early in March, a court in Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, heard a case about an AIDS-infected thief, and all the court police were issued with masks and plastic gloves. This shows they had little understanding about AIDS, and it also has a negative effect on the rest of society and attitudes towards AIDS among the public. The government and the media should be obliged to tackle this discrimination.

represent discrimination against AIDS-infected suspects," Ma added. "We think the extra protection relieves the pressure on the court police. With no masks, how could we deal with spitting? With no gloves, what could we do if he cut himself?"

Ma's explanations soon aroused a strong debate among AIDS volunteers, AIDS victims and judicial experts. Some say the court was sensible to protect the police and judges, while others think the measures were unnecessary.

**Zhu Ruiqi**, 50, an AIDS

patient in Shuangmiao Village, Henan Province

It shows they lack basic knowledge about AIDS. Why should they wear masks since the disease cannot be spread through the air? Maybe it's acceptable to make the suspect wear gloves to avoid the risk of bleeding. But I do not think the police should worry about using a pen used by an AIDS sufferer.

**Hu Jia**, an AIDS assistance volunteer in Beijing

This is definitely discrimination against AIDS victims. These measures are as ridiculous as

when AIDS patients were first treated in a Beijing hospital. Doctors would wear rubber over-shoes and a protection suit, stricter even than the precautions against SARS last year. When I worked with AIDS-infected colleagues in Taiwan, all our organization members treated them the same as anyone else.

It is common knowledge that spitting cannot spread the AIDS virus; only when the body fluid of an AIDS sufferer mixes with that of someone else can they be infected. I have never seen any special treatment towards AIDS-infected

prisoners in other countries.

**Another volunteer** in Beijing who requested anonymity

How can AIDS victims be treated in a fair and tolerant manner when even the court dares not use the pen used by an AIDS victim? Judges and police are representatives of the government, so how will the public react if they treat AIDS patients like this? The efforts to understand AIDS can be ruined by this.

**Zhu Maowen**, a writer for *www.jcrb.com*

I think the panic of the Xi'an court is not discrimination. If the police and the criminals have mutual trust, that's obviously the best. But both the police and the criminals look after themselves first. That is why there's a risk of AIDS-infected suspects attacking the police, and why the police choose these means to protect themselves. The self-protection measures taken by the police has nothing to do with discrimination.

**Wu Zhelan**, pseudonym of a writer for *www.jcrb.com*

The court showed double standards. The police dared not touch the pen used by Mu, but why then were suspects who were not infected with AIDS allowed to live in the same cell as Mu?

**Xu Keyin**, director of the Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention and Control Center, Ditan Hospital

AIDS is not SARS, and it is totally unnecessary to have the suspect wear a mask and gloves. Apart from the handcuffs, all the measures were unnecessary. The police and judicial department should not show such an excessive response to an AIDS-infected suspect, as it can have a negative impact on public attitudes. The Xi'an court should be educated about how AIDS can be spread since their panic arises from their lack of knowledge about the disease. I do not know if it is a kind of discrimination,



The special van used to transport an AIDS-infected defendant to court in Hangzhou.

## Humane or Indulgent?

### A Beijing court issues new regulations to ease suspects' suffering

By Sun Ming

In the past few years, a series of more humane policies towards criminal suspects have been issued in China.

Police now must try to avoid arresting suspects in front of their families. Court bailiffs are forbidden from using too much physical force with defendants. Convicts sentenced to death are permitted to see their family members before they are executed. These reforms have been praised by many people.

However, some are beginning to wonder if this trend might be going too far.

On Friday last week, Beijing Mentougou District People's Court issued two new regulations. The court said that in future it wouldn't try a case on the birthday of the suspect. And cases involving female suspects will now be tried only by female judges.

People have expressed different opinions about these regulations. Some think they are a reflection of the more humane trend in Chinese law, while others insist they will weaken the deterrent force against criminal behavior.

**Jing Yang**, law professor from Huazhong Science and Technology University in Wuhan, Hubei Province

I fully support new regulations that guarantee the basic human rights of suspects. I felt uncomfortable in the past when I saw bailiffs pushing defendants in the court. It seemed to be a tradition that the more severe the crime, the more harshly treated the suspect would be. I don't think that they should be treated like this. So I'm delighted to hear that bailiffs will have

to be more restrained.

But I don't support the regulations issued by Mentougou District People's Court. The regulations are excessively considerate. Suspects are suspects after all. In some cases, the trial is urgent. How can a court postpone holding the trial just because it is the birthday of the suspect? It sounds ridiculous.

The other regulation is somewhat reasonable. Some cases involve the privacy of the female defendant. If female judges are in charge of the case, it might be easier to ask the female defendant to confess her crime. But in some cases this consideration doesn't matter. So I don't think such inflexible regulations make sense.

**Xu Lanting**, law professor from China Politics and Law University

These so-called humane regulations are meaningless. As to the suspects who are awaiting the verdict, what they care about most is their hearing and the verdict, not their birthday. Some suspects might not want their hearing to be postponed, even for their birthday. I think a fair and efficient trial is the ideal embodiment of concern for the rights of the suspects.

**A staff member** from Mentougou District People's Court

Yes, a fair trial is the most important thing to a suspect. But the regulations won't influence the justice of a trial. Also, our regulations don't break any law. I really don't understand why people question them. These regulations reflect our concern for suspects. Suspects are also human. Why don't we pay more attention to their feelings?

**Han Yusheng**, law professor

from Renmin University

In the past, it seemed that law, especially criminal law, could only be associated with cold words like 'punishment'. But actually, criminal law should also have some milk of human kindness. This is the case in many countries in the world.

I fully support the changes in regulations we have seen in recent years to ease the suffering of suspects.

For the suspects, their freedom is restricted. Under these circumstances, they are usually fragile and alert to anything. The new regulations will make them feel better, so they may be more cooperative.

I think that the regulations issued by Mentougou District People's Court are not immoderate. In China's law, there is no regulation regarding which day a trial can or cannot be held. And the regulations won't influence the trial itself. So why don't we support them?

**Eric Easton**, law professor at the University of Baltimore

I believe that some of the humanitarian reforms are appropriate. There is no good reason to prevent a prisoner from seeing his family before he is executed. Such a practice would be regarded here as "cruel and unusual punishment," a violation of a constitutional right under our Eighth Amendment. Prohibiting bailiffs from unnecessarily pushing or otherwise harming defendants is also appropriate. Defendants here and now in China are presumed innocent until they are proven guilty, and so deserve the law's full respect. If, indeed, they are found guilty, punishment must come from the law, not the arbitrary whim of a bailiff. Finally,

handcuffs should only be used in court when a defendant has disrupted the proceeding.

On the other hand, there is no reason why female defendants should be tried only by female judges. All judges, male or female, should be capable of conducting a fair trial for any defendant who comes before them. And our law makes no provision for a defendant's birthday. The trial schedule is established by the court, not the defendant, and birthdays are not sufficient excuse for delay.

**Lei Kun**, a Ph. D student from Beijing Broadcasting University

I support the new regulations. Until the final verdict is announced, they are just suspects, not criminals. So it is not indulgent at all to avoid holding a trial on their birthday. As to the other regulation, I think it is very practical. It should be easier for female suspects to confess their crimes in front of female judges.

**Liu Yihua**, an engineer

Many courts have been inspired by the government's advocacy of humane policies. We should admit that many of them reflect the progress of the development of China's legal system. But some of them, like the regulations enacted by the Mentougou District People's Court, are a step too far.

I even heard that a local civil political department in Hubei Province permitted a prisoner to get married.

**Wang Ligang**, a college student from Beijing University

What? I've never heard of someone being spared a trial on their birthday. Why should suspects have such a privilege? The court is too indulgent!



# An Unknown Danger

By Dong Nan

People in China have read of cases of sexual abuse in other countries, but many do not seem to realize that it's a problem here as well. Many children and

parents simply ignore it and have little knowledge about it.

An online survey by *Your Intimate Sister*, a monthly journal for primary and middle school students, found that only half of the students in the survey

had any knowledge of sexual abuse, and about one third of these had seriously misguided ideas about it.

The survey, which began from the end of this January and lasted for 20 days, involved more than 6,000 respondents.

## Not taken seriously

Research conducted last year by Wang Dawei, a criminologist at China Police University, showed that attacks suffered by children were mainly robbery or those of a sexual nature. Nearly half the attacks were sexual assaults.

This compares worryingly to the results of another survey by *Your Intimate Sister* and The Chinese Youth League in 2003, which involved more than 10,000 primary and middle school students and 17,000 parents. They were asked to name the two most worrying risks they faced, and the most common results were "traffic accidents" (picked by 57% of students and 58% of parents) and "robbery on the way home or to school" (18% of students and 25% of parents). The risk of sexual assault was raised by 0.22% of students and 0.69% of parents. It ranked last in all the ten dangers the survey listed.

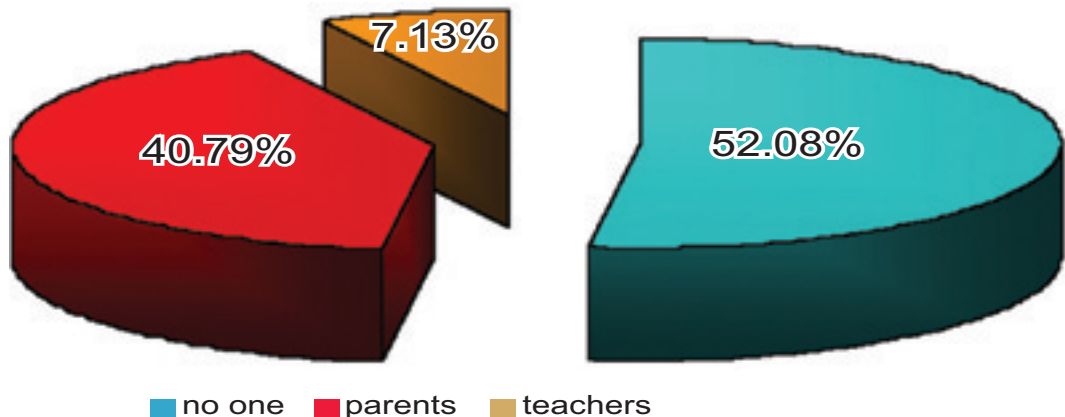
This lack of concern is perhaps one reason why there's so little education about sexual abuse, either at school or home. According to the online survey, 52% of the respondents said "no one ever told me about sexual assault"; about 41% said "my parents have told me"; and only 7% of the respondents said they had received some information about it from their teachers.

When asked what they knew about sexual abuse, about one third of respondents believed "it only comes from the opposite sex"; 27.41% of respondents said "only girls suffer sexual abuse", and 25.93% of respondents thought "it's only perpetrated by strangers".

"If children do not know what sexual abuse really means, of course they won't know their rights or how to protect themselves consciously when they find themselves in a dangerous situation," said Zhong Yinping, chief editor of *A Close Sister*, in the report.

Even some culprits have

Has anyone told you about sexual abuse?



claimed to have been unaware that they were breaking the law. In July 2002, pop star Hongdou was sentenced to three years in prison for raping seven boys.

According to prosecutors, he deceived the boys into coming to his hotel room where he then persuaded them to have sex with him. But when he was arrested, the singer said he didn't realize what he had done was "sexual abuse" or that it was against the law.

According to Zhang Xuemei, vice chief of Beijing Children's League Aid and Research Center, "sexual abuse of children" means violating the sexual rights of children under 18 years old either violently or through any other method.

## Where does the danger come from?

When asked "where do you think you are most at risk of sexual abuse", 72% of the respondents said "in public places"; among them, 27% said the bus was the most dangerous place; 16% said school and 11% thought the greatest risk was at home.

"I dare not take the bus to school in summer time," said Liu, a 15-year-old middle school student to *Beijing Today*. "More than once I have encountered rascals who touched my breast deliberately. Among the crowd-

ed people on the bus, I could not find where the hands came from," she said.

However, according to Zhang Xuemei, many more serious cases happen at school or the family home, and the culprits are teachers, relatives and parents. The problem with these cases is that many never come to light and can go on for several years.

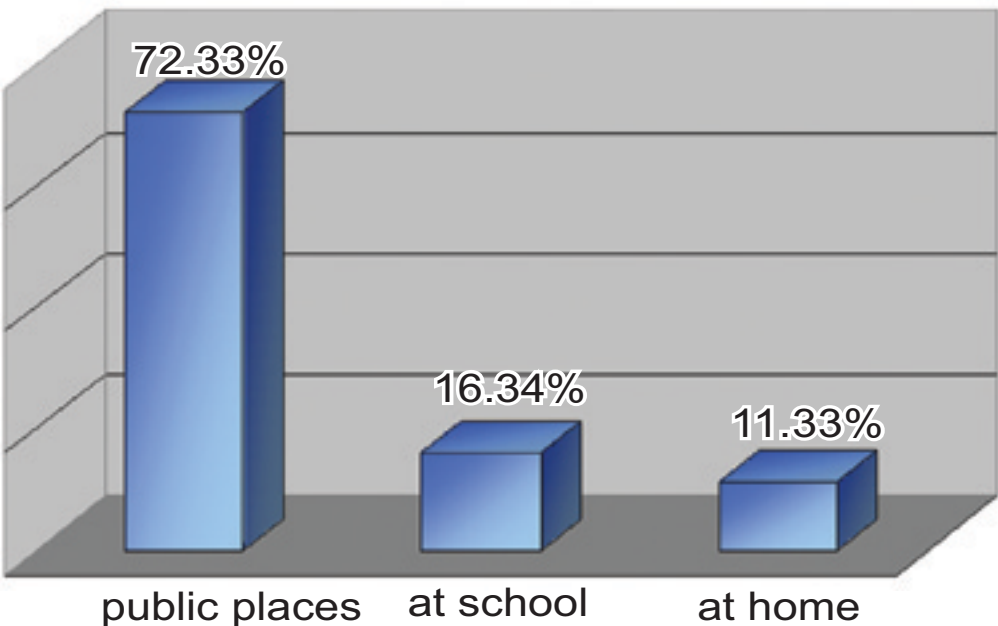
In December 2003, *Beijing Youth Daily* ran a story about Chen Youhai. The former math teacher at a primary school in Tongzhou District was sentenced to life imprisonment for sexually abusing 16 female students of his classes.

From 2000 to 2002, Chen,

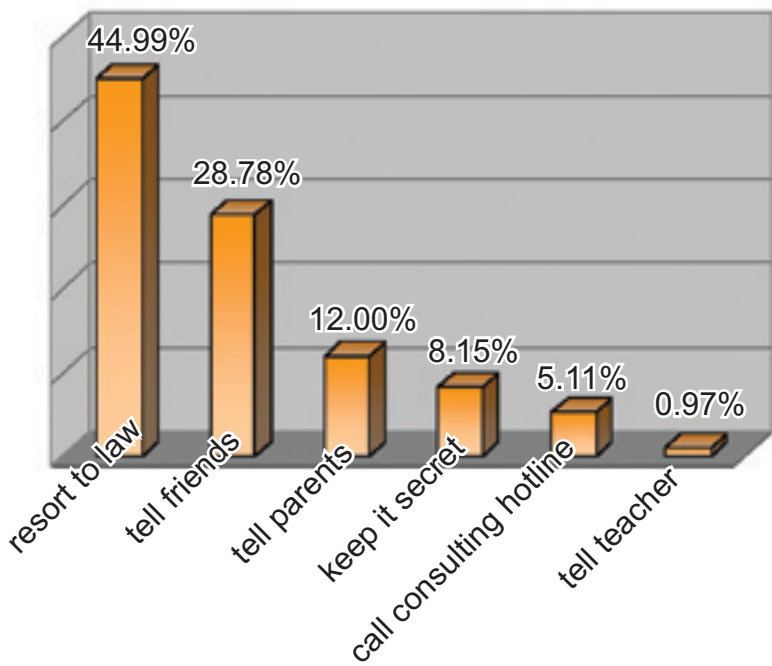
who was in his fifties, asked his students Li, Hu and Du to go to his office for "special courses" and then raped them. He did this on numerous occasions, telling the girls they would get in trouble if they told anyone about it. The three girls were aged between eight and ten years old at that time. Chen also abused 13 other girls in his office on many occasions. It was two years before his crimes were exposed.

In July 2002, Zhuo, a resident of Fangshan District, was sentenced to 14 years in prison after being found guilty of having abused his 15-year-old daughter for the previous four years. In 1998, Zhou divorced

Where do you think you are most at risk of sexual abuse?



If you suffered sexual abuse, what would you do first?



his wife and kept custody of his daughter.

After that, he raped her nearly every week. If she resisted, he beat her badly. The girl was too frightened and ashamed to tell anyone about it. It was four years before her mother discovered the scars from Zhuo's beatings, and then reported it to the police.

"In cases that happen at school or at home, it's easy for the criminals to take advantage of their victims' trust," Zhang Xuemei told *Beijing Today*.

"Generally, it's hard to expose these cases. Since the criminals usually have close relations with the victims, it's easy to avoid the vigilance of others. Besides, the victims are often too young to protect themselves, and they might have feelings of respect, trust or fear towards the culprits, and dare not go to others for help," said Zhang.

## Where can you find help?

The survey asked, "If you suffered sexual abuse, what would you do first?" In the replies, 45% said they would "resort to law"; 29% would "tell friends"; 12% would "tell parents"; 8% would "keep it secret"; 5% would "call some consulting hotline"; less than 1% said they would tell their teachers.

Zong Chunshan, chief of Beijing Children's League Aid and Research Center, said it was a good thing that many children were aware of the option of recourse to law. However, he pointed out that it would be better if more felt able to tell their parents first, since they would probably be able to take more effective methods, such as collecting evidence, as well as providing comfort. It's not the job of the police to offer comfort, Zong pointed out, and this could make seeking legal aid a traumatic experience for victims.

Zong called on parents to warn and educate their children about abuse, especially as there's little education about it in schools in China at the moment. Besides, school classes can only offer general information, and may not be able to pay special attention to each child's particular troubles.

Zhang Xuemei added that the need for social care centers to help abused children is urgent. She said that after suffering sexual abuse, many children dare not tell their teachers or parents for fear of being reproached. Therefore they need social help centers to offer a sympathetic ear. Though there are many help centers in China, she said, generally they only provide one specific service, such as law, psychology or health. All-around, professional help centers are needed.

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By Chen Ying

To help both local and foreign children with special needs who can't gain admittance to international schools, a Dutch woman, Dolores van Dongen established the Sunshine Learning Center two months ago. Now she hopes the local community will pay more attention to the needs of the children her center caters for.

Dolores married a Chinese man in 1995. She has lived and worked in Beijing since then. Her decision to establish the center was based on a very personal experience.

#### Rescue the baby

It all started when she gave birth at the end of 1997. "My daughter Laura was born on Christmas Day 1997 at Beijing Union Medical College Hospital," Dolores told *Beijing Today* on Tuesday.

"When Laura was born, I knew there was something wrong with her. She didn't drink, cry, or do anything at all. But nobody told me what was wrong with her," Dolores says. "She was my first baby. So I didn't have too much comparison material. I called my friends in Holland, describing how she looked."

"Her tongue was always outside her mouth and she had problems drinking due to a heart problem," she says. Gradually it became clear that baby Laura had the genetic disorder known as Down's Syndrome which disrupts physical and cognitive development.

Dolores recalls, "They were afraid I would leave her behind." The doctors told Dolores Laura had little chance of survival. "So I just took her home so she could be with me." Dolores then visited an American pediatrician. "He advised me to leave the country to get heart surgery for Laura immediately."

"Fortunately for us, Laura was a fighter, she survived," says Dolores.

On March 12 1998, Laura had a five-hour heart operation in Holland. "She became a different



Dolores van Dongen

baby. She could smile, she started to drink and she could move."

#### Hard to accept

Now Laura is 6 years old. "And she is still underweight. A normal child at 6 years old is around 20 kilograms while Laura is around 14 kilograms," says Dolores.

"When I came back to China, I was worried because there were no specialists in China like there were in Holland," she says.

Dolores started to look around for a school when Laura was almost two years old. Finally, the international Montessori School of Beijing accepted Laura. "But there was no special-needs teacher, or any therapists. Laura could not communicate like other children of her age. Every year she got more and more behind, and it was more difficult to catch up with children of her age," she says.

"At the beginning, she was fine. But from August last year, she started to have more and more tantrums, which was disruptive for herself but also for other people in the classroom," Dolores says. "I looked around for other international schools. There are only a few schools that accept children with disabilities. But it depends on the severity of the disability. For example, Down's Syndrome is basically not accepted by most of the international schools as it is not a minor disability."

Dolores left her former job in April last year. "I basically traveled every week. I wanted to give it up and look for another job so that I could spend more time with my children."

# All for Love

An expat opens a special education center for children with special needs in Beijing



Art class for the children

#### An investigation

Dolores stopped searching for a suitable school after the second school refused her. "I thought, what if I set up a special school myself." She began to do her homework. "I started to look around to find how many foreign children with special needs there were, how many foreign specialists/therapists there were, and how many Chinese special-needs schools there were."

"So after I printed and issued leaflets with messages saying I was looking for children with special needs, I found 27 other parents with special needs chil-

dren and 60 foreign specialists in Beijing," Dolores says.

"Then I looked at the Chinese special schools. In America, they have a teacher student ratio of 1:2.5. But in China, of course that's not the case. It's also very costly to run a special-needs school in China," she says.

Dolores says only one school drew her attention: the School for Special Education in Shunyi District. She decided to contact the school's principle Mrs. Hou Yajun.

#### Cooperation

Dolores says the school is very different to others she has

come across in Beijing. For instance, "Hou implemented Individual Education Plans (IEP) in the school," she says.

"She has a very clear idea about how a special-needs school should be run but she was also flexible and open to ideas. Then I said to her 'why can't we work together?' For example I offered to open an international department in the school," says Dolores. Hou told Dolores the school would have a new building one year later and they could work together at that time, as her school did not have any extra space for Dolores' plans. "But I couldn't wait. So I opened this cen-

ter in the basement of my house." Dolores said she got the registration from the Shunyi Civil Affairs Bureau thanks to Hou's help.

Dolores started to accept children on February 2. Now, besides her own daughter, there are two other children in the center. One is a boy from South Korea who had been turned away from more than 20 international schools due to his autism. The other child is a girl from Finland who also has Down's Syndrome. "I started telling international schools 'if you ever encounter children whom you can't accept, please send them to me.'"

The center has one American special-needs teacher and two Chinese teachers from Hou's school. There are also four therapists, and three art, music and dance teachers. "Therefore I have to ask for a tuition fee. But the tuition fee will only cover costs. I don't make any profit from it," says Dolores.

"I need more children to bring down the costs. Then I can do more things. I can purchase more special-needs equipment and material." Dolores wants to set up a library for books about special-needs education, Down's Syndrome, autism and other information for parents to borrow and the teachers to use for study.

"But I need them bilingual. I very urgently need Chinese translation of foreign books," Dolores emphasizes. "I want Chinese parents to read the books and the Special Needs teachers of the Shunyi School too. You can't buy these books in China. I want to make it possible for everybody to find out about children with disabilities. There is no reason to be afraid of a child who looks or acts different from a 'normal' child."

"I also want to set up a hotline," Dolores says. "When Laura was born, nobody would help me. I want people like me to have a telephone number they can call, where they can be helped."

"I also want to set up a farm to teach the children life skills. So my center is just the first step," Dolores says.

"Laura can understand three languages, Dutch, English and Chinese. Every child, every person has their own ability. My point is to find these good points. What are they able to do? Every child has something hidden behind their face," she says.

#### Share the resource

In order to help develop the school, the Shunyi local government sent Hou to America and Hong Kong to learn more advanced ideas about special-needs education.

"Till now, there is not a special certificate for psychology, physical, occupational and speech therapy in China. Most special-needs schools are still using standard methods and systems," Hou says.

"The most important thing is to cultivate teachers' ideas about special-needs education. It's necessary to learn from foreign expertise to improve the current situation in China," says Hou.

Actually, there have been some changes in special-needs education. For instance, the Beijing Municipal Government has created a special fund every year for special-needs schools in Beijing. All students in such schools get their tuition and accommodation free. Plus, the government will issue 100 yuan to every child per month for food.

"According to the central government's tenth Five-Year Plan, every disabled person should have access to treatment and assistance by 2015," says Ma Chengwu, chairman of the Shunyi Disabled Persons' Federation. Ma says the Beijing Municipal Government hopes to realize this plan before 2010.

"The children of foreigners can't go to the special-needs schools since the local schools aren't bilingual. So it's reasonable for the local government to support Dolores to open her center," Ma continued.

"Though there are special funds from the government, it's still not enough," says Hou. "Some children with special needs are from poor families." Hou says it's hard for some families to afford more than 80 yuan for a child's food every month. "That's why we need more support from society," she says.

By Sun Ming

Two Chinese workers who had been kidnapped by Anti-Sudanese government militants returned safely to Beijing on Wednesday. They were greeted by tearful family members at the airport. It was the first time that Chinese people had been abducted in Sudan.

#### Abducted on the way to work

For Li Aijun, 34, and Jia Huipeng, 22, March 14 should have been a normal day just like any other. In the morning, the two workers for North China Construction Company drove their truck to a water well located in western Sudan. Their work was to clean the walls of the new wells drilled by their company.

However, on their way to the well, Li and Jia encountered a group of rebel militants.

"Over 10 Sudanese men stopped our truck. After carefully searching it, they confiscated our satellite telephone," said Jia on Saturday during an interview with Xinhua.

Jia said he and Li were not the only people who were abducted that day. The rebels then hijacked five other vehicles including a water wagon and a truck transporting snacks. The rebels sat in the trucks and ordered the hostages to drive. Apart from Li and Jia, the other hostages were all Sudanese.

In the following days, the hostages drove in a convoy to various locations around western Sudan.

"They were not rude to us, but we still felt afraid. We didn't know whether they would let us live," said Jia.

Jia and Li didn't get hungry during their captivity because the rebels provided them with biscuits and water every day.

"One day we wanted some hot tea. They immediately gave us a packet of tea and some sugar," said Jia.

However, under a tight watch, Jia and Li kept looking for opportunities to escape.

#### Run for it

In the evening of March 16, the trucks arrived at a wooded area in western Sudan. Running on a narrow track through the

# Chinese Workers Kidnapped in Sudan



Jia Huipeng and his mother at the airport

Photo by Qian Bing'ge

wood, the trucks had to slow down and the distance between them increased.

"We realized that it was a good opportunity to escape. Also, there was only one rebel with us, sitting on the front seat," said Jia. "We discussed how to escape in Chinese."

Li and Jia had stayed in Sudan for nearly one year, so they were able to speak some basic Sudanese. They told the rebel that one tire might be flat.

With permission, Li and Jia stopped the truck and got out to check the tire. As soon as they had got out, the two men rushed toward the woods and fled. After a day's journey, they arrived at a small village in the evening of March 17.

Unfortunately, the villagers turned out to be supporters of the rebel militants and they had already been informed that the two Chinese had escaped.

"Two villagers pointed their rifles at us as soon as they saw us. They then tied us with ropes and iron chains and threw us into a dark room," said Jia.

Li and Jia overheard the villagers talking about handing them back to the militants later.

In the early hours of March 18, Jia managed to struggle free

of the iron chains and ropes. However, he failed to loosen the iron chains and rope around Li.

"They were too tight," said Jia. "Dawn was about to break. I would lose the last opportunity to escape, so I had to escape first. We felt very sad at that time, but we had no other choice," he said.

Learning a lesson from the first escape experience, Li hid himself as soon as he saw any people and he avoided any villages as he tried to find his way back to a city.

In the evening of March 18, Jia arrived at a small city which was around 100 kilometers from the village where he had escaped. By chance, he met a Sudanese whom he knew who was a staff member with a local waterpower department.

In the morning the next day, he went to a local police station to report the case.

#### Li released with the help of the Red Cross

"As soon as we heard two Chinese workers had been kidnapped by anti-government militants, we contacted the Sudan Government and discussed how to rescue them," Feng Fude, a member of the Chinese Embassy in Sudan, told Xinhua last Tuesday.

According to North China Construction Company, Sudan Branch, they found out what had happened in the evening of March 14.

"At around seven o'clock in the evening that day, we called them, because they should have returned. Then we learned that they had been kidnapped," a staff member of the company told Xinhua.

The company immediately reported the case to the Chinese Embassy in Sudan. The Chinese Embassy decided to try and contact the rebels directly with the help of a Sudanese who works for the North China Construction Company. He belonged to the same clan as some of the rebels and was able to provide the embassy with a phone number which they then called.

In the evening of March 22, Wang Huizhen, Consul of the Chinese Embassy in Sudan, called the rebels. She asked them not to hurt Li and said she hoped the situation could be settled peacefully.

At the same time, the Chinese Embassy asked the Sudan government to hold a cease fire with the rebels.

According to the Chinese Embassy, the rebel militants abducted the two Chinese and several other hostages as a statement of intent.

"They are not satisfied with the Sudan government which hasn't paid enough attention to the economic development and education in remote western areas," said Feng.

The rebels allowed Li to talk on the phone to the Chinese Embassy on March 23. He told Wang that he hadn't been hurt by the rebels.

On the same day, the organization said they would release all hostages if the International Red Cross could settle their conflict with the Sudan government.

On March 23, representatives of the International Red

Cross negotiated with the organization to persuade them to release Li.

On March 26, Li was released.

"In the afternoon of March 26, Li drove his truck out of the village where he had been detained for eight days. For safety, two cars of the International Red Cross drove with him. Over 30 rebels saw them off at the entrance of the village," said Xinhua last Tuesday.

#### We're staying

"Most Sudanese are kind to Chinese people. They don't hate us," said Jia. "So we won't change our minds about working here. Our work is meaningful."

The North China Construction Company said it wouldn't withdraw its business from Sudan after the incident. But it has decided to temporarily stop its business in some dangerous places in western Sudan where rebel militants gather. Li and Jia were given a vacation in China following their ordeal.

#### Two Chinese workers killed in Sudan

On Tuesday evening, the Chinese Embassy in Sudan said two Chinese workers had been found killed in Sudan on March 27.

The two Chinese were workers for China Liaohe Oil & Road Construction Company. They hadn't returned to their company in the evening after working at an oil field. In the morning of the next day, their bodies and the bodies of two other Sudanese were found 30 kilometers away from the oil field. They had been shot, and there was evidence of knife wounds.

The Chinese Embassy in Sudan named the two men: Ma Weidong and Wei Qinghui. Four suspects have been captured. Police believe the attackers were merely trying to steal their victims' car.

Up to now, 64 Chinese companies have started ventures in Sudan and over 5,000 Chinese people work in the country.



# Don't Just Dream



By Zhang Huan

By the end of 2003, student Shang Lifu of Northwest Normal University, Gansu Province, had become something of a celebrity. He'd just concluded a series of photo exhibitions in 18 universities in Gansu and Beijing, which recorded four years of his travels on bicycle and by foot through poverty struck western regions of China. The photos struck a deeper chord than Shang had anticipated.

In the summer vacation of 1998, the summer and winter vacations of 1999 and for the whole year of 2002, Shang travelled across 22 provinces, municipal cities and autonomous regions, and took more than 5,000 pictures. Many visitors to the exhibitions were moved to tears. In Beijing University, students wrote in the visitors' book how moved they felt and asked if there was some way they could help.

"I did not want to inspire tears. I want to work with more people to do something about education in the west. I believe there is a way," says Shang.

## On the road

Shang did not have a particular purpose in mind when he began his first trip by bicycle in 1998. Then a student of Jingyuan Normal School, he often talked with friends about their ideals. After exciting discussions, he always felt a sense of emptiness; the ideals were beautiful but not realistic. He could not help asking himself, "What do I study for?" He found himself questioning what he could do with the education he had received.

Having failed to come up with any answers, Shang set out on the open road. He decided to head out from his home in Jingtai County and venture into the vast rural areas to the west. "I wanted to discover more about society through my own experience," says Shang.

That summer, Shang rode through the Hexi Corridor to Xining, Qinghai Province, having taken just 100 yuan to cover expenses. To make sure he could finish his trip, he aimed for a fairly punishing schedule: covering 100 kilometers every day. And to save money he slept in his simple tent, even if the weather became severe.

When he finally arrived at Xining, he decided to give himself a treat and paid 6 yuan for a night in a small hotel. "I went to the public bath room. When I took off my clothes, the men around me started to leave one by one and soon there was only myself. When I got into the water, the dirt lifted off me immediately and floated on the water like a layer of oil. Then I knew why the other people had left."

During his first trip, Shang was taken aback by the poverty he saw. He found out how far



Shang Lifu's photo exhibition

Photo by Wang Wei

removed his student existence was from this kind of life. "I felt I could not just stay at school," he recalled.

In the winter vacation of 1999, Shang got on his bike again. This time, he wanted to visit the remote and poor rural areas of Gansu Province and try and find out more about the education systems there. Again he traveled light, but he paid his way by writing couplets (*duilian*) and cutting paper decorations for villagers who would repay him with food and housing. He also got his hands dirty with some farm work such as collecting manure, and even killing pigs. "After the second trip ended, I found I had a deeper understanding of the functions of education in the west. I wanted to know why there was such a wide gap between the education in the east and the west of China."

In June, 1999, to raise money for his third trip, Shang worked in a plaster factory for three months. He managed to earn 2,000 yuan. This time he headed east. The trip reinforced what he had found about the differences in schooling between east and west.

“Whenever I settle down, what I saw in my trips comes to my mind and I feel ill at ease.”

“Teaching in the rural areas of the west needs a kind of spirit, almost like religious faith.”

Shang's fourth trip began in March, 2002. During the year, he visited more than 100 schools in western areas of China. His journey took him across more than 30,000 kilometers.

## What kind of education?

After returning from his trips, Shang found himself feeling increasingly restless. "Whenever I settle down, what I saw in my trips comes to my mind and I feel ill at ease," he says.

In Ningxia, Shang visited the home of a 12-year-old girl named Ma Dongyan. She had been doing housework and cooking for her family for four years as her parents were both ill. There were four children in her family. She was the third eldest. To raise money for her sister and brothers to go to school, her eldest brother had gone to find work even though he had not finished at primary school. The family still was not

able to afford the tuition fees for the children.

In Shaanxi Province, Shang got to know a teacher in a school run by the local people. She had been teaching for 17 years. Her salary should have increased from several dozen yuan to more than 100 yuan at present. By now, she was owed more than 17,000 yuan. Despite that, she still did her job. "Teaching in the rural areas of the west needs a kind of spirit, almost like religious faith," says Shang.

While he was on his travels, many of the people Shang met complained to him that the government should invest more money in education. Shang has his doubts. "Is the problem only a matter of money?" he asks.

Huining County in Gansu Province is considered one of the most poverty struck areas in China. The environment is harsh and water is scarce. A basin of water is first used to wash vegetables, then faces,



Shang Lifu's photos of rural life

and finally clothes or to feed animals. Nevertheless, the county is proud of having produced more than 500 students, many of whom have attained masters degrees and doctorates. There are no special conditions or equipment for them, only the devout attitude towards education. Shang says the local people told him, "We sacrifice everything for children."

In an Inner Mongolian school funded through the Project Hope, Shang found the overhead projectors and recorders that every classroom was equipped with were mere ornaments. Some were even wrapped up and had never been used. The teachers said they were not used and many did not even know how to use them.

Shang realized education in the schools was too far removed from the real needs in rural areas. The schools only taught the students to read their textbooks and write Chinese characters. Also the textbooks were quite outdated and taught nothing about rural life. In Qinghai Province, the children of herdsmen were reluctant to go to school. Their parents would rather pay the fine for not sending them to school, because they could see little purpose in something where the children learned no practical skills.

"The present rural education follows the same model as that in the cities, which is totally impractical for the rural areas and has dampened farmers' enthusiasm for education. We

should use schools to teach students practical skills and technology as well as knowledge they can make use of," says Shang.

## "Being tired is happiness"

Shang has now finished his studies at Northwest Normal University and lives in a basement at Beijing Normal University. He's busy trying to organize aid for rural education projects.

The photo exhibition helped Shang recruit a lot of students to his cause. "At the beginning, I just wanted to show them the real rural conditions," he says. He also made presentations at the exhibitions. To his surprise, more than 1,000 students have volunteered to help, either to go and teach in the west or offering other forms of assistance. Shang has initiated a project named "Sunshine in the West" to organize for college students to go and help education programs in the western rural areas. "Most of the college volunteers are originally from the west. They want to do something for their hometown and they know the western conditions very well. We plan to divide the volunteers into different teams of different majors such as agriculture, medicine or forestry."

Shang has been surprised to discover that a number of students feel the same sense of emptiness and frustration about their ideals as he did. "College students should not feel this way. They need to know real society and real life. The 'Sunshine in the West' Project will be beneficial not only to the west but to college students in the cities as well."

Now the volunteers are preparing for their trips to the west while Shang is still trying to raise funds.

Besides all his various activities, Shang still tries to find time to attend classes on education at Beijing Normal University. He hopes to pursue postgraduate study at the university. "Sometimes I feel jealous of my classmates who are living an easy life thanks to their parents and who don't have to worry about making a living. But I don't want to live a life like them. I know what I am doing and why I am doing this." Currently Shang is making his own living by writing articles for a newspaper. He says he has to stay up late at least three nights a week to do it.

"I am really busy with all these things. Sometimes I feel so tired and ask myself why I should continue. But when I settle myself down and am alone, I feel what I'm doing is worthwhile. I'm devoting my life to my ideal, and I'm proud of that."

Shang Lifu

Photo by Wang Wei







This is the first time such a large distribution of ancient tombs have been found in the southern part of Beijing.

# Ancient Tomb Complex Discovered in South of Beijing

By Peng Xiaojiang  
A large ancient tomb complex has been found at Yizhuang High-tech Industrial Base in the southern part of Beijing. The discovery shows that there existed large-scale residential areas in the southern outskirts of the city in ancient times.  
The tombs were unearthed at a construction site, on which work began last November. After the initial discovery, Beijing Cultural Relics Research Office commissioned Shaanxi Dadi Survey Technique Research Office with the task of excavating this area, and the formal excavation began on March 1. So far, 43 tombs have been excavated, dating back as far as the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD), however most are from the Tang Dynasty (618 - 907). This is the first time such a large distribution of ancient tombs have been found in the

southern part of Beijing.  
A Mr. Xu, director of Shaanxi Dadi, told *Beijing Youth Daily* that the distribution of tombs conformed with the customs of those times, and according to archaeologists involved in the excavation, there are two types of tombs, namely "northern" and "southern district" tombs.  
The tombs in the southern district are mainly vertical tombs with brick arches and knife-shaped tombs. Most of the tomb bricks here are Han Dynasty style cord-line bricks and Tang Dynasty style ditch-line bricks. Unearthed utensils include some typical funerary objects of the Han Dynasty, such as pottery chickens, pots and figurines. Meanwhile some Tang Dynasty yellow glazed porcelain pots and white glazed porcelain bowls have also been found in this area, leading archaeologists to

believe that the tombs in the southern district are from the Han and Tang dynasties.  
Most of the tombs in northern district are in a vertical form with clay caves. It is likely they are a clan tomb, in light of their arrangement. However, due to there being few historical relics discovered in this district, the exact period from which the tombs date has not been confirmed.  
Compared with tombs excavated in the central plains and areas within Hangu Pass, the structure and style of the Yizhuang tombs show a greater diversity.  
Archaeologists say that there must have been a relatively densely inhabited area or even a town in the neighborhood of the tombs discovered. There may even exist a further expanse of tombs not yet discovered, therefore the excavation at Yizhuang will continue.

## Ancient Tibetan Site Nominated for World Heritage List

China is preparing to file an application to add the ruins of an ancient Tibetan kingdom to UNESCO's world cultural and natural heritage list.  
Preparatory work is well underway on the Zhada Clay Forest and Guge Kingdom Ruins in Ngari Prefecture, in the west of Tibet, according to the region's cultural authorities.  
The unique geological physiognomy of the clay forest and cultural and artistic value of the historical ruins and their significance in academic research meet the requirements for listing as a world heritage, the authorities said.  
The local government has made efforts to improve the environment around the Guge ruins, dismantling unauthorized buildings around the site, establishing protective fences and tourist guide signs in Chinese and English at key sites. About 10 Tibetan households in the area of the ruins have been relocated.  
Zhada, which means "the place where there is grass in the lower reaches of the river" in Tibetan, is a county on the border between China and India.  
The Guge Kingdom was founded around the 9th century by a descendant of King Lang Darma, who fled from Lhasa after the collapse of the Tubo Kingdom. The kingdom survived for about 700 years and disappeared mysteriously in the 17th century.  
Ruins of the castle, which was built and rebuilt several times between the 10th and the 16th centuries, stand on a hilltop covering 180,000 square meters. The three-storey structure includes 600 houses, with palaces on the top floor and monasteries and cave dwellings for common people at the bottom.  
Built with strong fortifications, parts of the castle remain in good condition in this relatively untraversed region.  
The ruins are famous for the murals, sculptures and stone inscriptions, which depict stories about Buddha, the kings of Guge and their ministers.  
The ruins were listed as one of China's major cultural protection sites in 1961. The central and local governments have invested 20 million yuan in restoring the Guge cultural relics since 1997. (Xinhua)

## Ancient Jar Sheds Light on Phoenix-Worship

By Mavis Lee  
A 7,400-year-old pottery jar stamped with the design of two flying phoenixes has been excavated recently in central China's Hunan Province, giving archaeologists a clue as to the origins of the imagery of the sacred bird.  
The two phoenixes have the typical characteristics of the legendary phoenix, which has a crest on its head, a long beak, a long neck and a long beautifully feathered tail. The phoenix and the dragon are the most worshipped legendary creatures in China since ancient times.  
The discovery shows that ancient Chinese myths relating to phoenixes dated back at least 7,400 years, said He Gang, head of the Hunan provincial archaeological research institute.  
He Gang headed the excavations at the Gaomiao culture ruins site, which cover an area of 15,000 square meters. Gaomiao is a Neolithic age site near Hongjiang, where a great many relics relating to religious rituals have been unearthed.  
"I wouldn't have believed that the jar could be made by ancient people 7,400 years ago if I hadn't picked it up myself," said He Gang. "It's proof that there were special artisans, artists, at that time."  
"The designs of the phoenix on the jar are far more delicate than those of two similar birds on an ivory dish unearthed several years ago from a Hemudu culture site, dating back 4,000 to 7,000 years, in Zhejiang Province."  
The phoenix is a mythical creature endowed with many fine characteristics: beautiful, auspicious, kind, peaceful, and boasting lofty natural virtues, according to He Gang. "Although the phoenix doesn't live in reality, it's in the heart of the Chinese people," he said.  
"However, the phoenix was not created purely out of imagination," He Gang said. "Phoenix designs unearthed from the Gaomiao culture ruins show that the original shape owed a lot to the peacock."  
Discovery of the phoenix designs also provided important evidence that the Yangtze River valley was a major cradle of Chinese civilization, he said. Moreover, discoveries of religious and sacrificial items at the site provide clues for studying the religious awareness, belief and art of the prehistoric people.



Photos by Lou Qiyong / Qian Bingge

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By Darlene Lee

Much has been made of the identity crisis in contemporary Chinese art circles with the dizzying pace of change, globalization and development sweeping this country. The Courtyard Gallery has recently entered that dialogue by making the self the star of its latest show, Me! Me! Me!

The exhibition, which opened February 22, is composed of self-portraits in the forms of paintings, photographs, sculptures and installation works by over 20 domestic contemporary artists and indicates the way China's avant-garde see themselves is growing and maturing along with the whole of society.

Curator Meg Maggio explained the exhibit "aims to illustrate self-consciousness in all its manifest forms... This is a conceptual show, allowing artists to experiment with new works, new means of self-expression, in a variety of medium."

Recent gallery-goer and associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago Lisa Norton said, "Me! Me! Me! relates to traditional themes such as self-portraiture and authorship but also to more recent phenomena such as branding and commoditization of artists: the artist as spectacle, persona and commodity. Some of the artists in the exhibition succeeded in extending these concepts of self beyond reinforcing the idea of artist as object."

"Here in China, this curatorial concept is particularly interesting because issues of self and subjectivity are inevitably extended to ideas of nationhood, national identity and center."

"Some artists' works naturally fit into an exhibition of self-portraiture, such as Zhu Ming and Feng Mengbo and Zeng Fanzhi," Maggio said.

Those three artists, who have collaborated with the gallery in the past, and all the others were encouraged to present new works, or at least to devise new ways to present older pieces. "Yu Hong's work, although certainly not new - her daughter is now in primary school - is a very personal small portrait of her nude, about nine months pregnant and posed in an idyllic outdoor nature scene," noted Maggio. "This painting had never been exhibited before."

Maggio expressed particular pleasure with the work of Liu Wei, a young photographer and graduate of the former Zhejiang Art Academy. He took a conceptual approach to answering the question of identity by snapping a series of pictures of his own teeth and those of friends around his age and assembling them into one work. Maggio explained

# Me, Myself and I

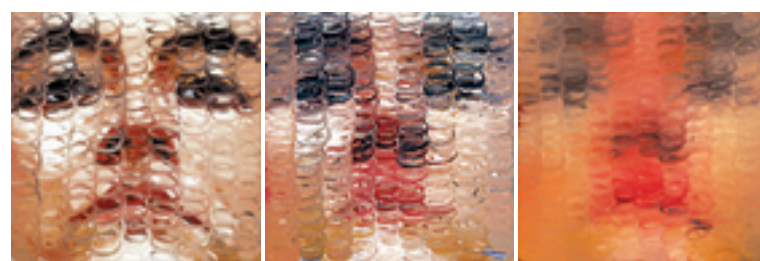
Courtyard Galley invites artists to look within for self-portrait show



Yue Minjun, Romanticism and Realism Study No. 1, acrylic and fiberglass, 74×125×110cm, 2003



Feng Mengbo, Q4U, photograph, 100×80cm, 2003



Zeng Fanzhi, Self Portrait, oil on canvas, 60×60 cm each

that many children of that generation were given tetracycline or similar antibiotics as children, resulting in the permanent discoloration of their teeth - a shared marker of being born in the 70s.

"On the other side, Liu's photo is quite abstract and appears as an architectural construct of rows of mouths. We've had audiences tell us the large format color photo of teeth and gums look like cave dwellings in Yan'an," Maggio continued.

The works of a few artists indicate they took the assignment of reflecting on the nature of self rather literally. Yang Qian's ethereal and spooky self-portrait depicts him in front of a fogged bathroom mirror, his cell phone number traced into the steam on its surface. Sculptor Zhan Wang departs from his normal medium and theme of national cultural identity in surrealistic, swirling, sci-fi-like photos of his nude body as reflected on the steel surfaces of some of his sculptures.

Artists Xing Danwen and Qiu Zhijie focus more on their place in wider society, Xing by portraying herself as a tiny figure dwarfed by towering new residential buildings, Qiu by showing the results of a trawl for his name on the Internet and a profile drawn on clear plexiglass and hung in front of a gallery window looking onto the Forbidden City.

Perhaps the least personal treatment of identity comes from Hong Hao, whose "use of banal of everyday objects as extensions of the body self creates a rich narrative and again leaves room for interpretation and experience of other individuals," noted Norton.

Among her top picks from the show were the works of Cang Xin. "His photos are particularly interesting because his whole body of work is concerned with boundaries between self and other. His work is highly personal but also allows viewers multiple ways of access," she said.

Norton also sang the praises of Feng Mengbo, an artist of high profile in the capital of late. His works depict him as a computer-generated entity inside video games, creating "an open fantasy arena for playful yet serious interpretation of political, social and technological themes," she said.

"Ma Liuming's work is also particularly appropriate for this

show because his entire body of work has been a year long investigation into gender identities. His construction of a self within a self, an alternative identity with which to interact with the world, has allowed him to take risks and make very honest and direct work," noted Norton.



Zhang Dali, AK-47, bronze

In organizing the show, the Courtyard and Maggio were certainly thinking far beyond themselves, hoping to raise the level of on-going contemporary art dialogue in the capital.

"I think artists here are getting more and more sophisticated in their response to site-specific works, made expressly for a thematic exhibition," said Maggio. "Exhibits without specific themes will become less and less viable. Group shows for the sake of group shows will not suffice. This is the trend internationally and should be the trend in China."

In response to the success of the show, the Courtyard has decided to put together a supporting catalog in order to present more of the featured artists' works. That catalog should be ready within two months. Me! Me! Me! runs until April 15.

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Liu Wei, photograph, 120×194 cm, 2002

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加裕华装饰



# Drama Festival Brings the World to Beijing



Drumstruck

By Yu Shanshan

The second Beijing International Drama Festival opens at the end of April, bringing over 50 productions to local stages in a far wider range of genres than the name suggests.

Beijing audiences will be able to see performances from 26 countries over five weeks, ranging from drama, opera, musical comedy, ballet and modern dance, as well as symphonic, pop and traditional music.

The festival will kick off on April 27 with the Really Useful Theatre Company's production of Andrew Lloyd Weber's musical *Cats* at the Great Hall of the People and close with a concert by Sarah Brightman at Capital Stadium on May 31. In between are some real treats for theater lovers, including *Peer Gynt*, by the Ibsen Theatre from Norway, a kabuki performance by Japan Shochiku Grand Kabuki Chikamatsu-za, and Dublin's Gate Theatre's highly acclaimed production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*.

For theater-goers who like a little music and/or dancing with their drama, there is Rossini's *Barber of Seville*, performed by the Frankfurt Opera, and from Dublin, Coisecim Dance Theatre's *Mermaids*, based on Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*. And for those happy to dispense with the drama altogether and just enjoy a night of music, color and movement, there are two spectacular percussion extravaganzas; *Drumstruck*, from Johannesburg, and from Seoul, a show called *Nanta*, which combines traditional Korean music with rock and jazz, played by "chefs" wielding knives, cleavers, cabbages, pots and pans.

There will also be a rich selection of Chinese drama, including a new Peking Opera titled *Mei Lanfang*, based on the life of the acclaimed opera singer, by the Peking Opera Theatre of Beijing, and Lao She's *Teahouse*, by Beijing's People's Art Theater.

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## What's on DVD

By Wang Xiaochun  
**Les Invasions Barbares**

Winner of Best Foreign Language Film at the 76th Academy Awards, this Canadian movie di-



rected by Denys Arcand, reflects provocatively and humorously on sex, friendship and other life issues. Sébastien (Stéphane Rousseau), the London-dwelling son of the divorced Rémy (Rémy Girard) and Louise (Dorothée Berryman), is persuaded by his mother to visit his estranged dying father in Montreal. (99 min, DVD 5)

**Seabiscuit**

Directed by Gary Ross, the story, set during the 1930's, surrounds a racehorse and three people who strive to make the

impossible possible. Tobey Maguire plays jockey Red Pollard, along side Jeff Bridges and Chris Cooper. As well as the feature, the DVD contains a photo album of 36 pages containing film stills and historical photos. (141 min DVD 5 and 9)

**Zatoichi**

Takeshi Kitano both directed and stars in this unforgettable film based on the legendary "blind swordsman." Along with the essential Takeshi-style violence, and the image of a blond-headed, hippe-like hero, the film picked up four awards at the 60th Venice Film Festival. A must for all Takeshi buffs. (116 min DVD 5)

### Billboard Singles Top 5

Position	Title	Artist	Album
1	Yeah!	Usher featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris	Confessions
2	One Call Away	Chingy Featuring J. Weav	Jackpot
3	Tipsy	J-Kwon	Hood Hop
4	Solitaire	Clay Aiken	Measure Of A Man
5	Hotel	Cassidy Featuring R. Kelly	Hotel 12



### Official UK Singles Chart Top 5

Position	Title	Artist	Album
1	Yeah!	Usher featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris	Confessions
2	Cha Cha Slide	DJ Casper	The Original Slide Album
3	Your Game	Will Young	Friday's Child
4	Toxic	Britney Spears	In the Zone
5	She Wants To Move	N.E.R.D	Fly or Die



### United World Singles Chart Top 5

Position	Title	Artist	Album
1	Toxic	Britney Spears	In the Zone
2	Yeah!	Usher featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris	Confessions
3	Hey Ya!	Outkast	Speakerboxxx / The Love Below
4	My Immortal	Evanescence	Fallen
5	Shut Up	Black Eyed Peas	Elephunk



Edited by Wang Xiaoxiao

## WORLDWIDE



Penelope Cruz and Tom Cruise

**Cruise and Cruz Call It Quits**

Hollywood couple Tom Cruise and Penelope Cruz have ended their relationship after three years but remain "good friends" and are not dating anyone else, People magazine reported on March 26, 2004. "They broke up at the end of January and it's amicable," Cruise's sister and publicist Lee Anne DeVette told the magazine. (Reuters)

about tackling *The Pink Panther*. Beckham would play a cameo role as - what else? - a soccer player in the MGM project, which follows a detective solving the murder of a famous soccer coach and the theft of the Pink Panther diamond. (Reuters)



Prince

**Prince Signs with Sony**

Recent Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Prince, who used to complain that he was a "slave" to one former record label, has signed with Sony's Columbia Records unit after several years as an independent artist, both parties said March 23.

The worldwide deal initially covers only the funk veteran's upcoming album, *Musicalology*, which Columbia will release in the United States on April 20.

**All Over Before 'Fat' Lady Sings**

The Royal Opera House in Covent Garden dropped top US soprano Deborah Voigt, a spokesman said Monday, from a production that would have called for her to wear a little black dress.

Voigt was to sing the lead in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* in June, but the role will now be filled by the slimmer Anne Schwanewilms.

The opera is normally performed in togas, but this production was in elegant evening wear. Casting director Katona told Reuters the opera house had to balance theatrical and musical concerns. "We are not just choosing a voice," Katona said, "We are talking about theater here." (Reuters)

Edited by Yu Shanshan



David Beckham

**Beckham Bent for Panther Prequel**

English soccer superstar David Beckham is in talks



Deborah Voigt

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## NKS Sports

By Jiang Yongzhu

A group of Chinese outdoor sports fanatics followed their dreams in 1995 and opened the NKS Sports Gear Store and still run the shop today.

"When choosing gear, you need to consider where and when you will use it," advised shop manager Hao Zheng. "The way I see it, anyone thinking of spending extended time outdoors needs to start with a backpack, tent, sleeping bag and camping mattress."

Hao's store offers all those items and more, even products meant more for urban use. The backpack selection includes both regular packs for comfortable portage during normal traveling and larger, more rugged models for mountain climbers and the like.

One of NKS's more popular packs sells well on account of its rip-stop polyester shell, light yet sturdy titanium frame, daisy chain for attaching gear, water bottle pocket and rock-bottom price of just 530 yuan.

In choosing a tent, factors such as altitude, humidity and possible precipitation at site of set-up need to be considered, according to Hao. Tents with tall domes offer comfort in easier conditions, while lower tents are needed in exposed areas with high winds. For all tents, solid waterproofing is essential. Fortunately, there is no need to shell out too much for a good shelter – NKS sells solid two-person mountaineering tents for as little as 300 yuan.

Beyond the other essentials of sleeping bags and pads or mattresses, NKS sells all manner of items to round out the camping experience, like lights, packable furniture and simple cooking utensils – one stop shopping before heading into the great outdoors.

**Where:** No. 149 Tucheng Xilu, off northwest Second Ring Road, 100 meters west of Mudan hotel, Beitaipingzhuang, Haidian

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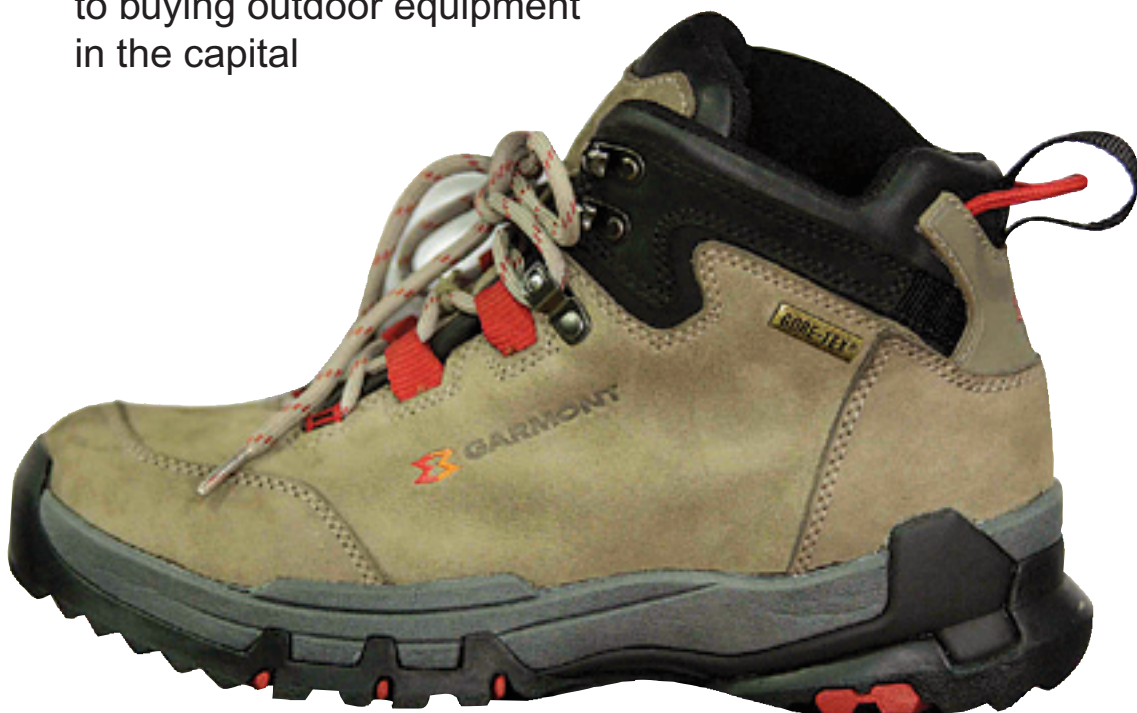
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Photos by Li Shuzhuan

## Get in Gear

A short guide  
to buying outdoor equipment  
in the capital



Garment suede QTX Pakota boots, 4,500 yuan

## Virtual Surplus

By Lu Pinrou

Camo fans, weekend warriors and anyone looking to equip themselves for outdoor adventures on the cheap should log onto www.chitclub.com, a website that specializes in military issue items.

The site's cluttered homepage divides the goods into several sections, including clothing, footwear and hats, badges, gear and flags. Useful information and descriptions are given for all products as well as occasional bits of more interesting background, such as the origins and histories of certain items.

Space is also provided for customers to add their reviews of the products, an excellent tool for selective shopping.

The site offers free membership with benefits of discounts on some items. For example, a popular bag meant to be strapped onto the leg costs members 30 yuan, while outsiders have to pay 10 yuan more.

The waterproof nylon bag is available in green or black and sized to be handy while on the move.

A domestically-made L-shaped army light with cover gets the chitclub's endorsement. It is waterproof, comes with four different colored lenses and goes for a preferential price of just 25 yuan for club members.

New items on the virtual shelves are US military issue clothes that feature "digital camouflage," so called because the patterns are generated by computers in pixel-like square shapes.

Another big seller is a cute military-style compass, which checks in at under 100 yuan for club members.

When pictures are not enough, head to the Chitu store at No. Yi 2, Aiming Lu, Ping'an Dajie in Xicheng District.

**Tel:** 6617 8447



Leg bag, 30 yuan for members

## Sanfo

By Lu Pinrou

Sanfo has grown from tiny beginnings into an outdoor gear store that distinguishes itself not only by its impressive size, but also by its varied stock of quality goods, decent prices and knowledgeable service.

On hand are all kinds of outdoor equipment from tents and sleeping bags to water bottles and camping stoves to footwear and clothing, most from famous makers such as Asolo, Arcteryx, Coleman and Laken. There is also an solid selection of travel maps and books for pre-trip study.

One of the most popular items is the Zenix LED headlamp from Black Diamond (330 yuan). Despite its lightness and fit-in-a-pocket size, this durable light generates a strong beam that cuts straight through the night, perfect for late hikes and other nocturnal adventures.

The store is currently offering a reduced price of 180 yuan on another quality Black Diamond product, the Access hiking pole. This high-tech stick features a comfortable, non-slip grip and telescopes from a full length of 1.4 meters to a short 63 centimeters for easy stowage.

When it comes to footwear, store staff recommend Garmony's Integra GTX boots for men (990 yuan). Both supple and waterproof, they have three distinct function zones – foot cushions in the rear, stabilizers mid-shoe and an easy-flexing forefoot zone to provide stability and traction.

The store also sports an area especially for water bottles, available in many colors and sizes. Top models are made of cast aluminum, fully coated inside, with reliable screw tops.

There are three Sanfo outlets in the capital, including the flagship store, and consumers can also check out the goods at their website, www.sanfo.com.cn.

**Where:** Main store on North Third Ring Road, southwest corner of Madian intersection (across from Ikea), Xicheng

**Open:** 9 am - 8 pm **Tel:** 6201 1333, 6201 5550

Branch store on first floor, Jinzhigiao Mansion, Jianwai Street, Chaoyang **Tel:** 6507 9298 / 6530 1915



Black Diamond Zenix headlamp (330 yuan)



Swiss-made Sigg water bottles, 135 yuan to 436 yuan

## Sun Wind

By Lisa Lee

One of the first, if not the first, retailer to introduce foreign outdoor equipment in the domestic market, Sun Wind has gone on to open three outlets in Beijing. All the stores offer wide-ranges of products from major makers, such as Sigg water bottles, Garment boots, Big Pack backpacks, Princeton headlamps and Suunto watches.

Qi Tong, an employee at the Sun Wind store across the Third Ring Road from Tuanjiehu Park in Chaoyang District told *Beijing Today*, "Before us, there were no stores exclusively selling outdoor sports products. We started the first store and started the trend."

On hand is all kinds of gear, from ice-axes, water purifiers and satellite positioning instruments for serious outdoorsmen to more mundane items such as belts, tents and sleeping bags for the less adventurous. Scattered among the different areas in the Tuanjiehu store is an interesting selection of books on outdoor adventures in Beijing's suburbs and more far-flung destinations.

The wall just inside the store's door is devoted to shoes, with most of the space going to Garment-brand products, known for their distinctive designs and innovative technologies, such as Duomont two-sole carbon-fiber heels. Garment's mixture of high-tech form and function results in shoes and boots that are comfortable and durable, justifying prices of 310 yuan to 4,500 yuan.

The opposite wall is covered with backpacks, the major name among which is Big Pack. Thirteen models of Big Packs are on offer, from high-end models with lightweight titanium frames for extended expeditions to dynamic smaller packs for flexibility and comfort in shorter-term use. Prices are reasonable, 200 yuan to 968 yuan, and the store's informed staff can help customers pick out the pack, or other gear, to best meet their needs.

**Where:** No. 6, Xiangjunbeili Lu, East Third Ring Road, across from west gate of Tuanjiehu Park, Chaoyang **Open:** 9 am - 7 pm **Tel:** 6585 8278

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### Gui Gongfu

By Joel Kirkhart

The area around Xiaojie in Chaoyang District is the scene of some of the most wholesale hutong destruction in the city. Block upon block of old residences, some decrepit, some not, have been pulled down to make way for mid-income housing and other big modern buildings. Yet not all of the area's past has been erased — nestled among the cranes, trucks and workers lies the Gui Gonfu restaurant, a literal oasis of tranquil antiquity in this hotbed of urban renewal.

Gui Gonfu occupies a huge courtyard home formerly owned notorious Qing ruler Empress Dowager Cixi before she married, after which she turned it over to a younger brother. His name was Guixiang, the inspiration for the restaurant's moniker. The huge, three-yard *siheyuan* has been remarkably preserved and though some areas are getting a touch-up, it is a peaceful and evocative place to eat.

Service is outstanding — the waitresses are attentive but do not hover and provide educated assistance in navigating the complicated menu without simply recommending the most expensive dishes.

Though the restaurant bears it's former owner's name, the kitchen does not really specialize in the specific foods of his family. Instead, the focus is on dishes made with tea, with dozens of tea-based options on the menu, rounded out by fare of Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Shanghia styles.



Luyu zhucha, ("Lu Yu makes tea")

A starter of meaty dried tofu in a thick, slightly sweet red sauce (*beileye dougan*) was a pleasant beginning to the meal and a preview of flavors that would show up again in other dishes.

Refined artistic sense is shown in a delicious beef-based dish named for an ancient poet and tea expert, *luyu zhucha*, which means "Lu Yu makes tea." The dish is intended to look like a fire, with long, bright red chilies standing for flame, russet strips of meat taking the place of wood and black fried leaves of oolong tea representing cinders. Over this concoction stands a small tripod suspending a little teapot and next to it sits a smal sculpture of the poet, looking eagerly on as his tea brews.

The dish is appealing on more than a visual level — the tender beef has a smoky flavor, as if it was roasted before being stir-fried with the other ingredients, perhaps imparted by the oolong tea leaves.

Just as carefully cooked is the eggplant-based *qie xiang*, a recipe adapted from a passage in the classic novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*. The dish consists of small cubes of soft eggplant topped with a contrastingly crunchy mixture of nuts and seeds. The nutty natural flavor of the eggplant comes through in a dish that is surprisingly rich, perhaps because of all the oil absorbed by the eggplant's flesh.

A lighter choice is the *babao youtiao*, made of chunks of freshly-fried oil sticks topped with classic "eight treasures" ingredients such as ham, beans and wolfberries. While *babao* sauce can taste canned and contrived at some restaurants, here it is a subtle and tasty complement to the heavier flavor of the oil sticks.

A plate of small, mild fresh chilies lightly fried (*youden xiaoqiao*) is tasty and pleasingly light on heat, but not really remarkable.

With its excellent service, food and environment, Guigongfu is a great place for a special night out or to take guests, and it should only get better when the renovations are done in the near future.

**Where:** No. 11 Fangjiayuan Hutong, off Chaoyangmen Nanxiaoje, Dongcheng **Open:** 10 am - 2 pm, 5-10 pm **Tel:** 6512 7667 **Average cost:** 100 yuan per person



Sijia piaoxiangji (roast chicken) at Jiandan Shenhua Photo by Tang Yang



Gui Gongfu occupies the well-preserved former home of a younger brother of Dowager Empress Cixi.

### Jiandan Shenghuo

By Dong Nan

The kitchen at the Jiandan Shenghuo, or "Simple Life," restaurant is dominated by men surnamed Shao, specialists in a cuisine their clan calls its own. Their cooking is innovative and popular, leading to packed tables and lines of hopeful diners in the mid-sized eatery.

In keeping with its humble name, Jiandan Shenghuo's menu is filled with familiar dishes that commonly turn up on dining tables at average local homes — yet through playing with flavors and cooking methods, the restaurant's versions are unlike those found anywhere else.

The Shao's innovative treatments extend all the way to simple cold dishes available in some form in nearly every Chinese restaurant in town. The *sijia paocai* takes common pickled vegetables and spruces them up with liberal use of garlic, the sharp bite of which is tempered a bit by fresh radish juice.

Among the main courses, the wait staff is quick to recommend *sijia piaoxiangji*, roasted chicken in a special sauce that tastes surprisingly like goose. The *sijia mizhi hongshaorou*, the family's spin on red-cooked pork, *sijia mizhi mendaiyu*, ribbon fish stewed in a secret sauce and *sha'er feichang*, which translates humorously to "silly pig intestines," are other dishes based on family favorites given new and tasty treatment.

One of the restaurant's specialties is fried rice, turned into relatively sophisticated dishes such as *labaicai chaofan* (fried rice with kimchi) and *sijia rouchaofan* (family-style fried rice with pork) and served in small wood barrels.

Diners not on a budget can sample the *sijia nongtangji baochi*, shark fin cooked in chicken broth, which costs 268 yuan and is made according to the Shao's secret recipe.

**Where:** Beisanhuan Zhonglu, opposite the Chinese Science and Technology Museum **Open:** 11 am - 10 pm **Average cost:** 80 yuan per person **Tel:** 6443 6357

### Xiaowangfu

By James Liu

The Xiaowangfu restaurants must be one of the worst-kept secrets in Beijing. Despite maintaining a relatively low profile and suffering the demolition of the original branch, which opened in 2001 near Scitech, the restaurants daily draw legions of diners, both local regulars and tourists. The new Xiaowangfu branch in Sanlitun has sustained the chain's success by upholding the recipe of tasty, home-style Chinese cooking at affordable prices.

Owner Wang Yong hails from Sichuan Province and has added a tang of his native land to many dishes while tempering some of the spicier Sichuan standards to meet the tamer tastes of Beijingers. Among his restaurant's specialties are stir-fried pig kidney with onions and parsley (*bao yaohua*), kung pao chicken, and stir-fried pork meat with crispy rice (*guoba roupian*). A must-try is the roast duck, which stands out from the pack with minimally greasy meat and chewy, relatively thick pancakes.

The menu at Xiaowangfu changes constantly, as Wang allows his chefs to create dishes in keeping with their own preferences. Yet he insists that his restaurants not blindly follow dining trends. "We can do spicy crabs (*xianglaxie*) and boiled fish in hot oil (*shuizhuyu*), but we won't attract customers with those dishes," marketing manager Li Xiao told *Beijing Today*. "We specialize in offering guests dishes that they associate with home."

While the food may be homely, the decoration and atmosphere certainly are not. Perhaps signaling the start of a new trend, the restaurant is divided into smoking and non-smoking area. Those that puff sit at the center of the space, while the non-smoking tables fill the wings of the joint, which was carefully designed to resemble a train. Home cooking in an environment more fun than home — it's a recipe that keeps Xiaowangfu perpetually packed and a real hometown favorite.

**Where:** 4 Gongti Donglu, Chaoyang **Open:** 11 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 6592 5555 **Average cost:** 65 yuan per person



Dining by disco light



Yangjia songkaoxia (shrimp roasted with shoots and roots)

### Yangjia Sifangcai

By Joel Kirkhart

While some *sifangcai* restaurants represent cuisines with centuries of tradition, Yangjia Sifanci makes dishes of more modern origins. The Yangs are natives of the Shanghai area that have moved north, and according to the menu introduction, their family cuisine is a melding of north and south as well as contemporary takes on some classics.

A fine example of the Yangs' cooking philosophy is readily evident in the *jinjiang yuzi baoshengcai*, which twists a Beijing-style classic of pork in a sweet, soy-based sauce with the inclusion of fish roe, which add flavor and give the sauce a thick, grainy feel. The dish is also liberally laced with diced chilies and meant to be wrapped inside fresh leaves of lettuce.

Another impressive creation is the *yangjia songkaoxia*, a plate of plump fresh shrimp roasted with chunks of bamboo shoot and *wosun* root (Chinese lettuce). Roasting brings out the natural sweetness of all the ingredients, the bamboo and wosun in particular, though it is a bit heavy on the oil.

A dish of small cabbage in soy sauce, nice and simple despite its fancy name of *baizhuo gaoyuan xiaobaicai*, shows that Yangjia Sifangcai's kitchen does equally well with more common items. The cabbage is cooked just right, the stems crunchy, the leaves tender and all full of juicy, natural flavor.

More impressive looking, yet less impressive tasting, is the *huoyan niurou*. The dish consists of beef, peppers and straw mushrooms cooked in foil and then served in a strange flambe. The beef slices have a slightly gamy flavor and the whole dish is unnecessarily heavy on oil.

The interior of the restaurant is pleasant, with soft orange walls and light green tablecloths, but close inspection reveals some serious cracks in more than the paint.

The Yangs are clearly onto something — their restaurant offers a solid mixture of innovative cuisine, decent location, reasonable prices and pretty good service. A lighter hand with the oil and there would be little room for complaint.

**Where:** Xinzhongjie, across the street from the Gongti 100 bowling alley, Chaoyang **Open:** 11 am - 2 pm, 5 - 10:30 pm **Tel:** 6552 7801 **Average cost:** 60 yuan per person



An attractive corridor leads to the bathrooms

### Recipe: Stir-fried Small Cabbage, Shanghai-style

One of the great things about spring is the appearance of young vegetables, like thin stalks of asparagus, crisp green peas and small greens, like the baak choi, or Chinese cabbage, in this simple, delicious and healthy recipe. The little vegetables have a milky, slightly sweet flavor and are crisper and more delicate than their larger cousins.

- 1 kilo small baak choi cabbage
- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 8 slices fresh, peeled ginger
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon light soy sauce

Carefully wash each small head of cabbage to remove grit between the leaves. Halve larger heads lengthwise, exposing the hearts, but leave smaller cabbages whole.

Heat a wok or sautee pan, add oil and heat until very hot. Toss in the ginger, followed by the cabbage, which will pop and hiss. Vigorously toss the baak choi several times, then add the salt and toss for about one more minute, until the cabbage begins to release liquid.

Reduce the heat and cook up to two more minutes. Remove from heat and scoop onto a serving dish without the excess water in the wok and top with the soy sauce. Serves six with three other dishes.

Photos by Li Shuzhuan



Zhengpaigu (steamed spare ribs) at Xiaowangfu



## Exhibitions



## My Smile

A solo show of works by surrealist oil painter Fang Tianyuan, a native of Wenzhou and a graduate of the Central Academy of Fine Art. His works have been bought by collectors in Hong Kong, Taiwan and the US.

**Where:** Beijing New Millennium Art Gallery, second floor Diyang Building, 2 Dong Sanhuan Beilu **When:** Saturday, 9 am - 6 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 13911166261

## Ink-and-wash Painting Exhibition

Boldly colored ink-and-wash paintings by outstanding Chinese artists will be shown in a collector-oriented show with all pieces up for sale.

**Where:** Melodic Art Gallery, 14 Jianwai Dajie **When:** till April 30, 9 am - 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6515 8123



## Liu Qinghe Solo Exhibition

In his latest traditional Chinese ink-and-wash paintings, artist Liu Qinghe explores facets of contemporary life, especially the relationships between urban people, highlighted by proficient use of shade and black.

**Where:** Red Gate Gallery, Dongbianmen Watchtower, Chongwenmen **When:** April 3 - May 9, 10 am - 5 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6525 1005



## Yunnan Cultural Exhibition

Yunnan Province is the seat of Dian culture, a nation that covered the area of over 70 present-day counties and cities. This exhibition features many priceless relics from the ancient southern kingdom, from objects used in war to ritual pieces and items from daily life.

**Where:** National Museum of China, east side of Tian'anmen Square **When:** till April 5, 9 am - 4:30 pm **Tel:** 6512 8321



## Integrated Exhibition

A mixed show of oil paintings, wash paintings and prints.

**Where:** Creation Gallery, North end of Ritan Donglu **When:** till April 9, 10 am - 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8561 7570

## Jiang Chunyun Solo Exhibition

Painter Jiang Chunyun address the ties between individual identity and society's collective power in her latest works, such as her *Breath* paintings, which represent inner dimensions of identity in a fearful light.

**Where:** White Space, 2 Jiux-

NORD-OUEST PRÉSENTE

# GUILLAUME CANET MARION COTILLARD

## Movies

## French Cinema Panorama

UN FILM DE YANN SAMUELL

### Jeux d'enfants

**From April 8 to 11, a series of nine new French films will be shown at the Hall of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.**

Films to be shown include Diane Kurys' *I Decided to Keep Back*, Martin Valente's *The Boys in the Street* and Marc Esposito's *French Man*. All films in French with Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** Hall of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, 23 Taipingqiao Dajie, Xicheng

**When:** April 8-11

**Admission:** 200 yuan for all films, 25 yuan per film

**Tel:** 800 810 3721

**Close Your Eyes at Night (Tianhei Qingbiyan)**

Directed by A Gan, starring Wang Zhiwen, Wu Qianlian, Li Xiaoran and Song Jia. This suspense/slasher flick takes place in a popular bar where people playing a game end up being killed the same night. No one can stop, though, because everyone wants to figure out who the murderer is... In Mandarin.

**Where:** UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian **When:** from April 1 **Tel:** 8211 2851

**Suspiria (1976)**

Directed by Dario Argento, starring Jessica Harper, Alida Valli, Joan Bennet and Miguel Bosé. A beautiful, dream-like tale of horror and witchcraft at a German dance academy. In Italian with English subtitles.

**Where:** Italian Embassy, 2 Dongerjie, Sanlitun **When:** April 8, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

**Nuan**

Directed by Huo Jianqi, starring Xiadong Guo, Teruyuki Kagawa and Li Jia. In this international film award-winner, young Nuan dreams of marry-

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ing a man from outside her village so she can finally leave. Her first lover, an acrobat, promises to return after two years but never reappears. Her next lover promises to come back after graduating college, but the same thing happens. Nuan waits in vain until she marries a mute farmer.

**Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** Tonight and Saturday, 8 pm **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13901134745

## Auction

## Guardian Weekend Auction

China Guardian Auction's 80th weekend auction kicks off next Friday, introducing over 2,800 items, including paintings, porcelain and antique furniture. The stars of the porcelain section are rare Ming and Qing dynasty bronze Buddha statues.

**Where:** Beijing Jianguo Garden Hotel, 19 Jianguomennei Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** April 9-11 **Tel:** 6518 2315

## Language exchange

A mechanical engineer (male, 24 years old) seeks a native English speaker for language exchange.

**E-mail:** jyying\_68087@sina.com

A middle school student wants to find a native English speaker for language exchange.

**E-mail:** abytaizhou@sohu.com

## Jams

## Hot Bands

Hang on the Box (*Guazai Hezishang*), Sands (*Shazi*), Glorious Pharmacy (*Meihao Yaodian*) play tonight and Ak-47, CMCB and Twisted Machine (*Niuqu de Jiqi*) rock out Saturday.

**Where:** Get Lucky, 1 Dongfang Qicaida Shijie, Laitai Jie, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 8448 3335

## Night of the Punk

Underground punk bands bring the noise.

## Sports

## Chess Friendship Tournament

The first Chess Friendship Tournament is both a fun youth match and a celebration of the first birthday of the Dragon International Chess Club. Chess fans young and old are welcome. Registration times are 11 am - 3 pm April 5 and 10 am - 1 pm April 6 and 7.

## Music

## China Philharmonic Orchestra

Philippe Bender conducts solo pianist Xu Zhong and the China Philharmonic Orchestra in a symphonic program that includes Mozart's *Overture to the Marriage of Figaro*, *Piano Concerto No 21 in C Major* and *Piano Concerto in G Major*.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie **Admission:** 50-380 yuan **When:** Sunday, 7:30 pm **Tel:** 6506 5345

## Jiang Yuheng Concert

It's been 14 years since Taiwanese singer Jiang Yuheng, known for his polite, mysterious and intellectual ways, came to Beijing, but he is sure to draw a huge crowd.

**Where:** Workers' Gymnasium, Gongti Beilu **When:** April 10, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-880 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

## Activities

## YPHH Activities

Another night for the Francophones - French speakers native and non- are welcome to *parlez* and dig in to an all-you-can-eat canape buffet including dessert. The 150-yuan ticket includes three glasses of wine of choice, the 90-yuan ticket one glass. After the freebies, fine wine is just 30 yuan a glass until the party ends.

**Where:** Le Cabernet Wine Bar, 3 Jingyu Hutong **When:** April 8, 6:30 pm **Tel:** 6512 8833

## Go Fly a Kite

People of all ages are welcome to enjoy a half-day outing to a village north of the city to learn how to fly fanciful kites from the lawns of traditional rural houses. The plan includes a relaxing lunch enjoyed from the warm comfort of an old northern-style heated bed, or *kang*, inside one of the residences.

**Where:** meet in the parking lot of Sunflower Tower (Shengfu Dasha), on Maizidian Lu, across the canal from Kempinski Hotel, Chaoyang **Admission:** 120 yuan per person **When:** Sunday, meet 10 am, return 3 pm **Tel:** 8462 2081

## Stage



## Contract Marriage (Hetong Hunyin)

Directed by Ren Ming, starring Wang Gang, Wu Gang and Wang Xihua. A bittersweet story of two divorced people who sign a one-year marriage contract.

**Where:** The People's Art Theatre, 22 Wangfujing Dajie **When:** till April 8, 7:15 pm **Admission:** 100 yuan **Tel:** 6466 9978

## Willing to Eat Mahua

This challenging play about a loser who has big dreams features a cast of seven, with each actor playing six roles.

**Where:** Haidian Theatre, 28 Zhongguancun Dajie, Haidian **When:** April 4-6, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 40-380 yuan **Tel:** 6255 8026

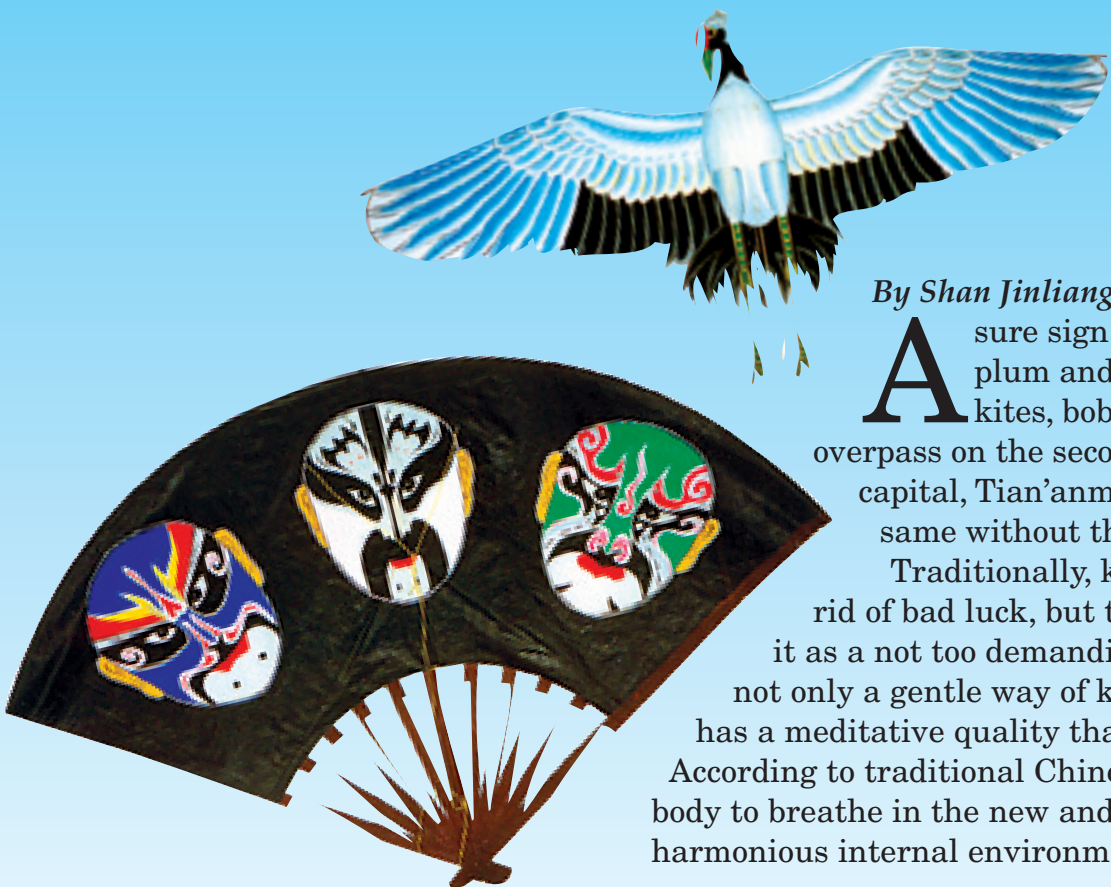
## Chang'an Theatre Opera

Tonight, the China Peking Opera Institute performs *Hong Niang*, a comedic love story starring Geng Qiaoyun. Tomorrow night, Zhang Jianguo of the China Peking Opera Institute will lead a performance of *Jiang Xiang*.

**Where:** Chang'an Grand Theatre, 7 Jiannei Dajie **When:** 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-800 yuan **Tel:** 6510 1309







By Shan Jinliang

A sure sign that spring has sprung, apart from peach, plum and cherry blossoms, is the sight of myriad kites, bobbing in the air above virtually every overpass on the second and third ring roads. In China's windy capital, Tian'anmen Square just would not seem the same without them.

Traditionally, kite flying was a way of getting rid of bad luck, but today, most proponents see it as a not too demanding form of exercise sports. Kite flying is not only a gentle way of keeping the legs and arms in shape, it also has a meditative quality that can help dissipate pressure and worries. According to traditional Chinese medical science, kite flying causes the body to breathe in the new and breath out the old, helping to form a harmonious internal environment.



# The Sky is the Limit



Photo by Photocom

## Kite flying sites

Parks are the obvious places to head for, and the larger ones, like Chaoyang Park and the Temple of Heaven, are always popular with kite fliers. For the real enthusiasts though, any piece of open land, flyover or bridge will do.

Professionals say the beach is the best place for kite flying, other fans recommend football grounds or golf courses as a good choice (footballers and golfers might disagree).

Xu Rongzheng and Zhao Shiming from the Beijing Kite Flying Association provided the following recommendations, where kites can be flown (mostly) free of charge, unthreatened by powerlines and other such hazards.

Tian'anmen Square. One of the most popular spots in Beijing for kite flying, just be sure to stay out of the way of tourists watching the national flag raising and lowering ceremonies in the morning and evening.

The square outside the west gate of the Olympic Sports Center.

The east gate area inside the Temple of Heaven.

Chaoyang Park and Junwangfu Square just to the east.

The Imperial City Wall Park, between Wanfujing and the Forbidden City.

Yunhe Wenhua Guangchang in Tongzhou District, about 20 kilometers east of Tian'anmen (beyond the Fifth Ring Road).

Fangzhuang Sports Stadium.

The square between the China Millennium Monument and Yuyuantan Park.

## Where d'ya gett'em?

Kite making is a traditional craft in China that dates back thousands of years. Some people still make their own kites every year, but for the average enthusiast, there is a wide enough variety available in wholesale markets, speciality shops and even mobile kite stalls that turn up seasonally at popular locations.

Sunhe Wholesale Market. With around 100 stalls selling kites, this is Beijing's largest kite market. Take Jingshun Lu (which runs alongside the Airport Expressway) from Sanyuanqiao to Sunhe, just past Dashanzi, it's on the right hand side. Open 9 am to 5 pm daily (kite-flying season only), there are kites of all kinds ranging from 10 to several hundred yuan available.

Huasheng Tianqiao Cultural Market, also called Xin (New) Tianqiao Market, 500 meters west of Huaweiqiao on the South Third Ring Road, is open all year around. There are over 20 stalls, selling traditional Chinese and western style kites, ranging from 1 to several thousand yuan, as well as a full range of kite reels and string.

Zuo'anmen Small Commodity Market, near Huansheng Tianqiao Cultural Market, in Fengtai District. Strictly wholesale.

Zhao Shiming says wholesale markets are the best place to buy kites, as they can be 50 percent or more cheaper than elsewhere. A traditional Beijing style swallow kite, might cost 4 or 5 yuan wholesale, but over 10 yuan in a shop. Also, wholesale markets usually have a larger variety available.

## Choosing a kite

Kites of every imaginable type can be bought in Beijing. Traditional diamond shaped kites, insect, crab, eagle and bat shaped kites, dragon kites, character kites, not to mention stunt, triangle and delta kites make the market more complex than one unfamiliar with this pastime might imagine. Choosing a good kite can be difficult for a beginner, but the experts recommend starting out with a hard-wing kite.

Here are some tips from Ma Xiaopeng, a folk artist kite maker recognized for his craftsmanship by UNESCO and a kite wholesaler for nine years at Huasheng Tianqiao and Hao Deli.

The frame is critical to the performance of a kite, regardless of whether it is of the soft wing or hard wing variety. Make sure the joints are fixed firmly, and that the two sides are perfectly symmetrical. The lower wing of a hard wing kite should be slightly softer than the upper one, and the wing tip should be the softest.

The type of fabric used to make a kite is also important. The better quality the fabric, the less likely it is to distort and the better its air-catching ability. You can also judge a kite from its appearance, a good kite invariably features delicately drawn lines and color.

The best way to check a kite's quality is to try it before buying. Watch to see whether it flies steadily or not when the wind-force changes.

## Price

Hard wing kites can be as cheap as 1 to 5 yuan for the small, mass-produced models, but a decent hand made one will cost at least 50 yuan. Soft wing kites are usually more expensive, starting from 5 to 20 yuan for the small, mass-produced variety.

Stunt kites and triangle kites surged in popularity last year. Those made with silk can cost 200 to 300 yuan or even higher, and for hand designed competition models, the price can be as high as 10,000 yuan.

Ma says for a beginner, 40 yuan should be enough to get started; 10 to 20 yuan for the kite itself, 10 to 20 yuan for the reel and 10 yuan for a 500-meter-long string. Someone looking for something more than just a toy and might easily spend 100 hundred or so yuan; 50 yuan for the kite, 50 yuan for a professional reel and 30-plus yuan for the string. For the truly dedicated kite flyer, however, the sky is the limit!



For hardcore enthusiasts, a length of string wrapped around a stick is just too low-tech!

## Kite flying tips

Before you go fly your kite, you need to pick the right time and the right place. Kite flying is best at wind speeds between 2 and 6. Beginners should wear gloves to avoid "string burn."

Keep one eye on your kite, and one eye on where you're going!

## Make a simple diamond kite

Raw materials: nine bamboo strips, a piece of thin paper, such as cotton paper, glue, string, paint and a pen.

Procedure:

- 1) Cut three bamboo strips 150 mm long and 1.5 mm wide and 1 mm thick, and arrange the strips in an equilateral triangle.
- 2) Cut two more strips the same size, bind them into a V shape.
- 3) Cut one bamboo strip 300 mm long, place it as illustrated.
- 4) Cut three 240 mm bamboo strips, connect the two triangles together, one on top the other at the bottom.
- 5) Paste the laterals first of the triangles then the back part.
- 6) Paint an ancient Chinese coin-shaped circle with a light yellow color on both sides of the top, and paint the blank part of the coin on the black. Draw the frontal part with black eyebrows, eyes and beard. The central part is white, merging into a dark orange, and the outside fades to a pale orange. You have just painted a Peking Opera mask!
- 7) Attach the string. Tie a knot at the tip of the V-shaped bamboo bar, and attach the string to this knot.

